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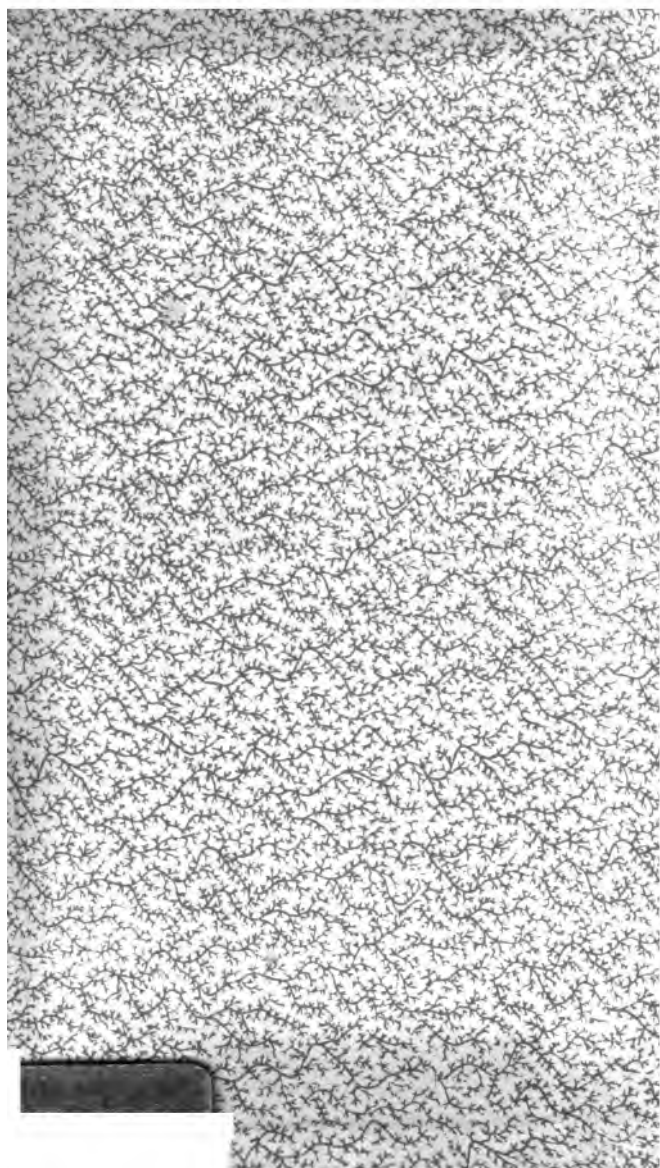
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R E M A R K S
O N T H E
L I F E and W R I T I N G S
O F

Dr. JONATHAN SWIFT,

Dean of St. PATRICK'S, *Dublin*;

In a Series of

L E T T E R S

F R O M

JOHN Earl of ORRERY

To his SON, the Honourable

HAMILTON BOYLE.

The THIRD EDITION, Corrected.

*Hæc sunt quæ nostrâ liceat te voce moneri.
Vade, Age.*

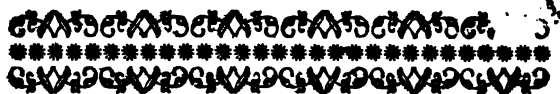
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M.DCC.LII.





LETTER I.

To the Honourable

HAMILTON BOYLE,

Student of *Christ-Church* College
in *OXFORD*.

My dear HAMILTON,

I Want no motive to gratify your request of hearing often from me, especially as your letters always give me a particular pleasure. I read them over not only with the fondness of a father, but with the affection of a friend. They revive in my mind the agreeable hours which attend a studious life, in that elegant seat of the muses, from whence they are dated. In such a situation, amidst the best Authors, and in a free conversation with men of letters, you will be able to adorn your mind, and give it a serene and a just way of thinking: And I shall have the happiness not only of seeing you forming yourself every day for public life, but rendered more capable of exerting your faculties,

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with dignity and advantage to your country, and with a rising reputation to yourself.

For my own part, early disappointments, the perplexed state of my affairs, indifferent health, and many other untoward incidents, all contributed to make me, even in my earliest part of life, too fond of retirement. Years have increased the inclination, and time rather confirms than corrects the error; however, I have not suffered my mind to be totally inactive: but by holding as little connexion as possible with the living, I have employed myself in conversing, and forming an acquaintance with the dead: and have from thence received more real satisfaction and improvement, than probably might have attended me, had I been directed in the pursuit of fame, fortune, or ambition.

I am much pleased that you approve of my observations on PLINY's letters. I engaged in that work, with a design of pointing out, to your brother LORD BOYLE, the amiable qualities of that elegant Roman. But I cannot rest satisfied, unless I offer to you also some public token of my paternal affection: and therefore, I have lately been examining the works of DR. SWIFT, with an intention of gathering materials for my future correspondence with you: and here, my dear HAMILTON, I dedicate to you those criticisms which have occurred to me; and shall mix with them such particulars of his life and character, as, I flatter myself, may tend at least to your entertainment, if not to your improvement.

Let me begin by giving you a short but general view of SWIFT's character.

He

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He was in the decline of life when I knew him. His friendship was an honour to me, and to say the truth, I have even drawn advantage from his errors. I have beheld him in all humours and dispositions, and I have formed various speculations from the several weaknesses to which I observed him liable. His capacity and strength of mind were undoubtedly equal to any task whatever. His pride, his spirit, or his ambition, call it by what name you please, was boundless: but, his views were checked in his younger years, and the anxiety of that disappointment had a visible effect upon all his actions. He was sour and severe, but not absolutely ill-natured. He was sociable only to particular friends, and to them only at particular hours. He knew politeness more than he practised it. He was a mixture of avarice and generosity: the former, was frequently prevalent, the latter, seldom appeared, unless excited by compassion. He was open to adulation, and could not, or would not distinguish between joy, flattery, and just applause. His abilities rendered him superior to envy. He was undisguised and perfectly sincere. I am induced to think, that he entered into orders, more from some private and fixed resolution, than from absolute choice: be that as it may, he performed the duties of the church with great punctuality, and a decent degree of devotion. He read prayers rather in a strong nervous voice, than in a graceful manner, and altho' he has been often accused of irreligion, nothing of that kind appeared in his conversation or behaviour. His cast of mind induced him to think, and speak more of politics than of religion.

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His perpetual views were directed towards power: and his chief aim was to be removed into *England*: but when he found himself entirely disappointed, he turned his thoughts to opposition, and became the patron of *Ireland*, in which country he was born. Here it may not be improper to observe to you, that many of his friends imagined him a native of *England*, and many others, I know not whether to call them friends or enemies, were willing to suppose him the natural Son of Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE. Neither of these facts are true. He was born in *Dublin*, *November* the thirtieth, in the year sixteen hundred and sixty seven, and was carried into *England* soon after his birth, by his nurse, who being obliged to cross the sea, and having a nurse's fondness for the child at her breast, conveyed him on ship-board, without the knowledge of his mother or relations, and kept him with her at *Whitchurch* in *Cumberland*, during her residence three years at that place. This extraordinary event made his return seem as if he had been transplanted to *Ireland*, rather than that he had owed his original existence to that soil. But perhaps, he tacitly hoped to inspire different nations with a contention for his birth: at least in his angry moods, when he was peevish, and provoked at the ingratitude of *Ireland*, he was frequently heard to say, "I am not of this vile country, I am an Englishman." Such an assertion, although meant figuratively, was often received literally: and the report was still farther assisted by Mr. POPE, who in one of his letters has this expression, "Tho' one or two of our friends are gone, since you saw your native country, there

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"there remain a few. " But Dr. SWIFT, in his cooler hours, never denied his country: on the contrary, he frequently mentioned, and pointed out the house where he was born. The other suggestion concerning the illegitimacy of his birth is equally false. Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE was employed as a minister abroad from the year sixteen hundred and sixty five, to the year sixteen hundred and seventy: first at *Brussels*, and afterwards at the *Hague*, as you will find by his correspondence with the Earl of *Arlington*, and other ministers of state: So that Dr. SWIFT's mother, who never crossed the sea, except from *England* to *Ireland*, was out of all possibility of a personal correspondence with Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE till some years after her son's birth.

I have already mentioned to you the exact place, and date of Doctor SWIFT's nativity; but the rules of biography make it necessary to give you some account of his family. It shall be as short as possible; since, although his ancestors were persons of very decent, and reputable characters, he himself has been the herald to blazon the dignity of their coat. His grandfather was the Reverend Mr. THOMAS SWIFT, Vicar of *Goodridge* near *Ross* in *Herefordshire*. He enjoyed a paternal estate in that county, which is still in possession of his great grandson DEANE SWIFT, Esq; He died in the year sixteen hundred and fifty eight, leaving six sons, GODWIN, THOMAS, DRYDEN, WILLIAM, JONATHAN and ADAM.

* Letter LXXX. Mr. POPE to Dr. SWIFT, *March* 23, 1736-7.

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Two of them only, GODWIN and JONATHAN, left sons. The descendants of GODWIN are mentioned in GUILIM's heraldry. JONATHAN married Mrs. ABIGAIL ERICK of *Leicestershire*, by whom he had one daughter and a son. The daughter was born in the first year of Mr. SWIFT's marriage; but he lived not to see the birth of his son^a, who was called JONATHAN, in memory of his Father, and became afterwards the famous Dean of *St. Patrick's*.

The greatest part of Mr. JONATHAN SWIFT's income had depended upon agencies, and other employments of that kind: so that most of his fortune perished with him: and the remainder being the only support that his widow could enjoy, the care, tuition, and expence of her two children devolved upon her husband's elder brother, Mr. GODWIN SWIFT, who voluntarily became their guardian, and supplied the loss which they had sustained in a father. Mrs. SWIFT, about two years after her husband's death, quitted *Ireland*, and retired to *Leicester*, the place of her nativity.

The faculties of the mind appear and shine forth at different ages in different men. The infancy of Doctor SWIFT passed on without any marks of distinction. At six years old, he was sent to school at *Kilkenny*, and about eight years afterwards, he was entered a student of Trinity College in *Dublin*. He lived there in perfect regularity, and under an entire obedience to the statutes: but the moroseness of his temper often rendered him very

^a Doctor SWIFT was born some months after his father's death.

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unacceptable to his companions; so that he was little regarded, and less beloved. Nor were the academical exercises agreeable to his genius. He held logic and metaphysics in the utmost contempt, and he scarce considered mathematics and natural philosophy, unless to turn them into ridicule. The studies which he followed were history and poetry. In these he made a great progress; but to all other branches of science he had given so very little application, that when he appeared as a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, he was set aside on account of insufficiency.

You will be surprised at such an incident in his life; but the fact was undoubtedly true: and even at last he obtained his admission *speciali gratia*: a phrase which in that University carries with it the utmost marks of reproach. It is a kind of dishonourable degree, and the record of it, notwithstanding Dr. SWIFT's present established character throughout the learned world, must for ever remain against him in the academical register at *Dublin*.

Ambition, you will agree with me, could scarce have met with a severer blow. HERCULES found himself set aside for want of strength; or, if admitted among the wrestlers, admitted only by favour and indulgence; yet still he must be conscious, that he was HERCULES. Disappointments, the earlier they happen in life, the deeper impression they make upon the heart. SWIFT was full of indignation at the treatment which he had received in *Ireland*, and therefore resolved to pursue his studies at *Oxford*. However, that he might
be

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be admitted *ad eundem*, he was obliged to carry with him the *Testimonium* of his Degree.

The expression *speciali gratiâ* is so peculiar to the University of *Dublin*, that, when Mr. SWIFT exhibited his Testimonial at *Oxford*, the members of the *English* University concluded, that the words *speciali gratiâ* must signify a Degree conferred in reward of extraordinary diligence, or learning. You may imagine, he did not try to undeceive them. He was immediately admitted *ad eundem*, and chose to enter himself of *Hart Hall*, now *Hartford College*, where he constantly resided (some visits to his mother at *Leicester*, and to Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE at *Moore Park* excepted) till he took his degree as Master of Arts, which, if I remember rightly, was in the year ninety-one.

Having attended my friend SWIFT thus far in his road of life, let me rest a little before I proceed farther with him in the journey; and let me desire you to keep this letter, as I intend that it shall be followed hereafter by others of the same sort, and relating to the same person.

I am, my dearest HAMILTON,

your affectionate Father,

O R R E R Y.

L E T.



L E T T E R II.

I Am happy, my dear HAMILTON, to find that the talk which I have undertaken of placing together some memoirs of Dr. SWIFT's life, will be an acceptable present to you. In my last letter, you may remember, that I conducted Dr. SWIFT from his birth, in the year sixteen hundred and sixty seven, to his taking his degree of Master of Arts at *Oxford*, in the year sixteen hundred and ninety one. Curiosity may induce you to know, in what manner he could subsist, or by what channel the springs of his revenue were supplied, at a time when both kingdoms, but particularly *Ireland*, were in great confusion. You will almost tremble for him, when I tell you, that in the year of the Revolution, his uncle GODWIN SWIFT had fallen into a kind of lethargy, or dotage, which deprived him by degrees of his speech and memory; and rendered him totally incapable of being of the least service to his family and friends. But, in the midst of this distressful situation, as if it was ordained, that no incident should bereave mankind of such a genius, Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE (whose Lady was related to Dr. SWIFT's mother) most generously stepped in to his assistance, and avowedly supported

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supported his education at the University of *Oxford*. Acts of generosity seldom meet with their just applause : Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE's friendship was immediately construed to proceed from a consciousness, that he was the real father of Mr. SWIFT, otherwise it was thought impossible, that he could be so uncommonly munificent to a young man, no ways related to him, and but distantly related to his wife. I am not quite certain, that SWIFT himself did not acquiesce in the calumny. Perhaps, like ALEXANDER, he thought the natural son of JUPITER would appear greater than the legitimate son of PHILIP.

But I must not omit to tell you, that another of his father's brothers, WILLIAM SWIFT, assisted him when at *Oxford*, by repeated acts of friendship and affection. I have a letter now before me, which, tho' torn, and imperfect in several places, shews his gratitude and devotion to the uncle, whom I have just now mentioned, and whom he calls *the best of his relations*. I will transcribe this epistolary fragment ; since at least it is so far curious, as it gives us a specimen of SWIFT's manner of writing and thinking, at that period of his life.

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Moore Park, Nov. 29, 1692.

S I R,

*M*Y sister told me, you was pleased (when she was here) to wonder, I did so seldom write to you. I been so kind, to impute it neither to ill mann

respect. I always thought that sufficient from one, who has always been but too troublesome to you: besides I know your aversion to impertinence, and God knows so very private a life as mine can furnish a letter with little else: for I often am two or three months without seeing any body, besides the family; and now my sister is gone, I am likely to be more solitary than before. I am still to thank you for your care in my Testimonium, and it was to very good purpose, for I never was more satisfied than in the behaviour of the University of Oxford to me. I had all the civilities I could wish for, and so many favours, that I am ashamed to have been more obliged in a few weeks to strangers, than ever I was in seven years to Dublin College. I am not to take orders till the King gives me a Prebendary: and Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE, tho' he promises me the certainty of it, yet is less forward than I could wish; because, I suppose, he believes I shall leave him; and upon some accounts, he thinks me a little necessary to him.

If I were

entertainment, or doing you any satisfaction by my letters, I shall be very glad to perform it that way, as I am bound to do it by all others. I am sorry my fortune should

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should sling me so far from the best of my Relations, but hope that I shall have the happiness to see you some time or other. Pray my humble service to my good aunt, and the rest of my relations, if you please.

You do not see in these few lines the least symptoms of that peculiar turn of phrase, which afterwards appeared in all his writings; even in his most trifling letters. Neither his learning, nor his genius were yet arrived to any degree of ripeness. Or perhaps the letter was rather the effect of duty than inclination; and in that case, the style of it must be elaborate, and void of all freedom and vivacity. It is dated from *Moore Park*, near *Farham* in *Surry*, where Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE then resided.

SWIFT, as soon as he had quitted the University of *Oxford*, lived with Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE as his friend, and domestic companion. When he had been about two years at *Moore Park*, he contracted a very long and dangerous illness, by eating an immoderate quantity of fruit. To this surfeit I have often heard him ascribe that giddiness in his head, which with intermissions sometimes of a longer, and sometimes of a shorter continuance, pursued him till it seemed to compleat its conquest, by rendering him the exact image of one of his own *Struldbruggs*, a miserable spectacle, devoid of every appearance of human nature, except the outward form.

In compliance to the advice of his physicians, when he was sufficiently recovered to travel, he went into *Ireland*, to try the effects of his native air: and he found

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found so much benefit by the journey, that in compliance to his own inclinations, he soon returned into *England*, and was again most affectionately received by Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE, who had now left *Moore Park*, and was settled at *Shene*, where he was often visited by King WILLIAM. Here SWIFT had frequent opportunities of conversing with that Prince; in some of which conversations, the King offered to make him a captain of horse: an offer, which, in splenetic dispositions, he always seemed sorry to have refused; but at that time he had resolved, within his own mind, to take orders; and during his whole life, his resolutions, like the decrees of fate, were immovable. Thus determined he again went over into *Ireland*, and immediately enlisted himself under the banner of the Church. He was recommended by Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE to Lord CARTER, then Lord Deputy, who gave him the first vacancy, a prebend, of which the income was about an hundred pounds a year. SWIFT soon grew weary of this preferment: it was not sufficiently considerable, and was at so great a distance from the metropolis, that it absolutely deprived him of that kind of conversation and society, in which he delighted. He had been used to very different scenes in *England*, and had naturally an aversion to solitude and retirement. He was glad therefore to resign his prebend in favour of a friend, and to return to *Shene*, where he lived domestically as usual, till the death of Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE, who, besides a legacy in money, left to him the care and trust of publishing his posthumous works.

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As during my friend SWIFT's residence with Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE, he became intimately acquainted with a Lady, whom he has distinguished, and often celebrated in his works, under the name of STELLA; I cannot think, my HAM, that it will be improper to give you at once her history; although, according to the rules of biography, I ought perhaps to have delayed the account, till we arrived at that period of his life, when he married her: but as I may have occasion to speak of her in various parts of SWIFT's Works, and as his manner of living with her will shew you, how much he deviated from the common order of men, I shall fill up the rest of my letter with her extraordinary Story.

STELLA's real name was JOHNSON. She was the daughter of Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE's steward, and the concealed, but undoubted wife of Dr. SWIFT. Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE bequeathed her in his will one thousand pounds, as an acknowledgment of her father's faithful services. I cannot tell how long she remained in *England*, or whether she made more journeys than one to *Ireland* after Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE's death; but if my informations are right, she was married to Dr. SWIFT in the year seventeen hundred and sixteen, by Dr. ASHE then bishop of *Clogher*.

STELLA was a most amiable woman, in mind, and person. She had an elevated understanding, with all the delicacy and softness of her sex. Her voice, however sweet in itself, was still rendered more harmonious by what she said. Her wit was poignant without severity.

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city. Her manners were humane, polite, easy, and unreserved. Wherever she came she attracted attention and esteem. As virtue was her guide in morality, sincerity was her guide in religion. She was constant, but not ostentatious in her devotions. She was remarkably prudent in her conversation. She had great skill in music, and was perfectly well versed in all the lesser arts that employ a lady's leisure. Her wit allowed her a fund of perpetual cheerfulness: her prudence kept that cheerfulness within proper limits. She exactly answered the description of PENELOPE in HOMER.

*A woman loveliest of the lovely kind,
In body perfect, and compleat in mind.*

Such was STELLA: yet with all these accomplishments she never could prevail upon DR. SWIFT to acknowledge her openly as his wife. A great genius must tread in unbeaten paths, and deviate from the common road of life: otherwise, surely a diamond of so much lustre might have been publicly produced, although it had been fixed within the collet of matrimony: but the flaw, which in DR. SWIFT's eye reduced the value of such a jewel, was the servile state of her father, who, as has been said before, was a menial servant to SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE. Ambition and pride will, at any time, conquer reason and justice; and each larger degree of pride, like the larger fishes of prey, will devour all the less: thus the vanity of boasting such a

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wife

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wife was suppressed by the greater vanity of keeping free from a low alliance.

Dr. SWIFT and Mrs. JOHNSON continued the same œconomy of life after marriage, which they had pursued before it. They lived in separate houses; he remaining at the deanery, she, in lodgings at a distance from him, and on the other side of the river *Liffy*. Nothing appeared in their behaviour inconsistent with decorum, or beyond the limits of platonic love. They conversed like friends; but they industriously took care, to summon witnesses of their conversation: a rule to which they adhered so strictly, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prove they had ever been together without some third person.

A conduct so extraordinary in itself always gives room for various comments and reflections: but, however unaccountable this renunciation of marriage rites might appear to the world, it certainly arose not from any consciousness of too near a consanguinity between him and Mrs. JOHNSON, although the general voice of fame was willing to make them both the natural children of Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE. I am persuaded, that Dr. SWIFT was not of that opinion; because, the same false pride that induced him to deny the legitimate daughter of an obscure servant, might have prompted him to own the natural daughter of so eminent a man as Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE. There are actions of which the true sources will never be discovered. This perhaps is one. I have told you the fact, in the manner I have received it from several of SWIFT's friends and relations,

I

and

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and I must leave you to make your own observations upon it.

You may imagine, that a woman of STELLA'S delicacy must repine at such an extraordinary situation. The outward honours, which she received, are as frequently bestowed upon a mistress, as a wife. She was absolutely virtuous, and yet was obliged to submit to all the appearances of vice, except in the presence of those few people, who were witnesses of the cautious manner in which she lived with her husband, who scorned, my HAMILTON, even to be married like any other man.

Inward anxiety affected by degrees the calmness of her mind, and the strength of her body. She began to decline in her health in the year seventeen hundred and twenty-four; and from the first symptoms of decay, she rather hastened, than shrunk back in the descent, tacitly pleased, to find her footsteps tending to that place, where *they neither marry, nor are given in marriage*. She died towards the end of *January*, seventeen hundred and twenty-seven, or eight, absolutely destroyed by the peculiarity of her fate: a fate, which perhaps she could not have incurred by an alliance with any other person in the world.

My paper, my time, and every circumstance, put me in mind of assuring you, my dear HAMILTON, that I am,

Your most affectionate Father,

O R R E R Y.

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## LETTER III.

I join with you entirely in thinking *STELLA* one of the most unfortunate of her sex. Her catastrophe was such as might have drawn pity from a breast less susceptible of that passion than yours. Injurious treatment, disappointed love, a long lingering illness, were all circumstances of the melancholy kind. Be not surprized, say *HAMILTON*, when I tell you, that he never spoke of her without a sigh: for such is the perverseness of human nature, that we bewail those persons dead, whom we treated cruelly when living. But, I am making reflections, when I intended to write memoirs. Let us return to *SWIFT*.

Upon the death of Sir *WILLIAM TEMPLE* he came to *London*, and took the earliest opportunity of delivering a petition to King *WILLIAM*, under the claim of a promise made by his Majesty to Sir *WILLIAM TEMPLE*, "That Mr. *SWIFT* should have the first vacancy, which might happen among the prebends of *Westminster* or *Canterbury*." The promises of kings are often a kind of chaff, which the breath of a minister bloweth, and scattereth away from the face of a court. The petition had no effect. It was either totally forgotten, or drowned amidst the clamours of more urgent claims. From this first disappointment, may probably be dated  
that

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that bitterness towards kings, and courtiers, which is to be found so universally dispersed throughout his works.

After a long and fruitless attendance at *Whitehall*, SWIFT reluctantly gave up all thoughts of a settlement in *England*. He had dedicated Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE's works to the king. The dedication was neglected, nor did his Majesty take the least notice of him after Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE's death. What then was to be done? honour, or, to use a properer word, pride hindered him from staying long in a state of servility and contempt. He complied therefore with an invitation from the Earl of BERKLEY (appointed one of the Lords Justices in *Ireland*) to attend him as his chaplain and private secretary. Lord BERKLEY landed near *Waterford*; and Mr. SWIFT acted as secretary during the whole journey to *Dublin*. But another of Lord BERKLEY's attendants, whose name was BUSH, had, by this time, insinuated himself into the Earl's favour, and had insinuated to his Lordship, that the post of secretary was not proper for a clergyman, to whom only church preferments could be suitable or advantageous. Lord BERKLEY listened perhaps too attentively to these insinuations, and making some slight apology to Mr. SWIFT, divested him of that office, and bestowed it upon Mr. BUSH. Here again was another disappointment, and a fresh object of indignation. The treatment was thought injurious, and SWIFT expressed his sensibility of it in a short, but satirical copy of verses entitled *The Discovery*.



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However, during the government of the Earls of BERKLEY and GALWAY, who were jointly Lords Justices of Ireland, two livings, *Laracor* and *Rathbeggan*, were bestowed upon Mr. SWIFT. The first of these rectories was worth about two hundred, and the latter about sixty pounds a year; and they were the only church preferments that he enjoyed, 'till he was appointed Dean of *St. Patrick's*, in the year seventeen hundred and thirteen.

As soon as he had taken possession of his two livings, he went to reside at *Laracor*, and gave public notice to his parishioners, that he would read prayers on every Wednesday and Friday. Upon the subsequent Wednesday the bell was rung, and the Rector attended in his desk, when after having sat some time, and finding the congregation to consist only of himself, and his clerk ROGER, he began with great composure and gravity, but with a turn peculiar to himself, "*Dearly beloved ROGER, the scripture moveth you and me in sunny places.*" And then proceeded regularly through the whole service. I mention this trifling circumstance only to shew you, that he could not resist a vein of humour, whenever he had an opportunity of exerting it.

As I have given you a particular example of his humour, let me give you a particular instance of his pride: especially as it comes in properly enough in point of time.

Whilst SWIFT was chaplain to Lord BERKLEY, his only sister, by the consent and approbation of her uncles and relations, was married to a man in trade, whose

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whose fortune, character, and situation, were esteemed, by all her friends, suitable for her in every respect. But, the marriage was entirely disagreeable to her brother. It seemed to interrupt those ambitious views, which he had long since formed: He grew outrageous at the thoughts of being brother-in-law to a tradesman. He utterly refused all reconciliation with his sister, nor would he even listen to the entreaties of his mother, who came over to *Ireland*, under the strongest hopes of pacifying his anger, having, in every other instance, found him a dutiful, and an obedient son: but his pride was not to be conquered, and Mrs. SWIFT finding her son inflexible hastened back to *Leicester*, where she continued till her death.

During his mother's life-time, he scarce ever failed to pay her an annual visit. But his manner, of travelling was as singular as any other of his actions. He often went in a waggon; but more frequently walked from *Holyhead* to *Leicester*, *London*, or any other part of *England*. He generally chose to dine with waggoners, hostlers, and persons of that rank; and he used to lye at night at the houses where he found written over the door *Lodgings for a penny*. He delighted in scenes of low life. The vulgar dialect was not only a fund of humour for him, but I verily believe was acceptable to his nature; otherwise I know not how to account for the many filthy ideas, and indecent expressions (I mean indecent in point of cleanliness and delicacy) that will be found throughout his works.

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I need not tell you, that a strict residence at *Laracor*, was not in the least suitable to his disposition. He was perpetually making excursions not only to *Dublin*, and other parts of *Ireland*, but into *England*, especially to *London*. So rambling a disposition occasioned to him a considerable loss. The rich deanery of *Derry* became vacant at this time, and was intended for him by Lord BERKLEY; if Dr. KING, then Bishop of *Derry*, and afterwards Archbishop of *Dublin*, had not interposed, entreating with great earnestness, that the deanery might be given to some grave and elderly divine, rather than to so young a man; "because (added the Bishop) the situation of *Derry* is in the midst of presbyterians; and I should be glad of a clergyman, who would be of assistance to me. I have no objection to Mr. SWIFT. I know him to be a sprightly ingenious young man; but instead of residing, I dare say, he will be eternally flying backwards and forwards to *London*; and therefore I entreat, that he may be provided for in some other place."

SWIFT was accordingly set aside on account of youth; but, as if his stars had destined to him a parallel revenge, he lived to see the Bishop of *Derry* afterwards set aside on account of age. That Prelate had been Archbishop of *Dublin* many years, and had been long celebrated for his wit and learning, when Dr. LINDSEY, the Primate of *Ireland*, died. Upon his death Archbishop KING immediately made claim to the Primacy, as a preferment to which he had a right from his

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 23

his station in the see of *Dublin*, and from his acknowledged character in the church. Neither of these pretensions were prevalent. He was looked upon as *too far advanced in years* to be removed. The reason alledged was as mortifying as the refusal itself: but the Archbishop had no opportunity of shewing his resentment, except to the new Primate Dr. BOLTER, whom he received at his own house, and in his dining parlour, without rising from his chair, and to whom he made an apology, by saying, in his usual strain of wit, and with his usual sneering countenance, "My Lord, I am certain your Grace will forgive me, because, *You know I am too old to rise.*"

In the year 1701, SWIFT took his Doctor's degree, and towards the latter end of that year, or according to our absurd way of reckoning, in the year 172 $\frac{1}{2}$  King WILLIAM died. Queen ANNE's reign will open a new scene, and will probably afford me materials for more letters than one. The more the better, when in each of them I can assure you, that your behaviour, as well as my own inclinations, oblige me to be

*Your affectionate Father,*

O R R E R Y.

L E T.

## LETTER IV.

UPON the death of King WILLIAM, and the accession of Queen ANNE, Dr. SWIFT came into England. It cannot be denied, that the chief ministers of that Queen, whether distinguished under the titles of Whigs or Tories, of High Church or of Low Church, were, from the beginning to the end of her reign, encouragers of learning, and patrons of learned men. The wits and poets of that era were numerous and eminent. Amidst the crowd, yet shining above the rest, appeared Dr. SWIFT.

*Ipse ante alios pulcherrimus omnes,  
Infert se socium Æneas, atque agmina jungit.*

It will be impossible, in mentioning the reign of this Princess, or in writing memoirs of Dr. SWIFT, to avoid the frequent use of those cant words Whig and Tory, “two creatures, says a modern author, who are born with a secret antipathy to each other, and engage as naturally when they meet, as the elephant and rhinoceros.” In a mixture of these two jarings ani-

\* See the Spectator, No. 50.

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 25

males consisted the first ministry of Queen ANNE ; but the greater share of the administration was committed to the Whigs, who, with indefatigable industry, soon engrossed the whole ; enclosing their Sovereign within their own fortifications, and keeping her captive within their own walls. The Queen, whose heart was naturally inclined towards the Tories, remained an unwilling prisoner several years to the Whigs ; till Mr. HARLEY, with a Tory army, undermined all the whiggish fortresses, levelled their works to the ground, seized their Princes, and during the remainder of her life, surrounded and defended her with a new set of troops under the command of the Duke of ORMOND.

Dr. SWIFT was known to the great men of each denomination : and although he soon attached himself openly to the Tories, it is certain he had been bred up, and educated with Whigs ; at least with such, who, in the Lexicon of Party, may be found ranged under that title. His motives for quitting the lower vallies of Whiggism for the higher regions of Torism appear throughout his works. The persons who had now signalized themselves as Whigs, had renounced those principles by which the old Whigs were denoted, and had embraced several of those tenets of which their forefathers had either a real, or a pretended, abhorrence. The effects of power and ambition are extraordinary and boundless, they blind our faculties, they stagger our resolution, and they subvert our nature. Not all the metamorphoses of OVID can produce a parallel equal to the change that appears in the same man,

## 26 REMARKS ON THE LIFE

man, when from a Patriot he becomes a Courtier : yet it may be asserted, and will redound to the honour of Dr. SWIFT, that when he rose into the confidence and esteem of those great men, who sat at the helm of affairs during the last years of Queen ANNE's reign, he scarce ever lost himself, or grew giddy by the plenitude of power, and the exalted station of frequently appearing in the confidence, and favour of the reigning minister. He may have been carried away by inconsiderate passion ; but he was not to be swayed by deliberate evil. He may have erred in judgment, but he was upright in intention. The welfare and prosperity of these kingdoms were the constant aim of his politics, and the immediate subject of his thoughts and writings. But, as HAMLET says, " Something too much of this." Let us continue therefore to trace the footsteps of his life ; in which scarce any circumstance can be found material from the year seventeen hundred and two, till the change of the ministry in the year seventeen hundred and ten. During this interval, he had worked hard within those subterraneous passages, where, as has been hinted before, the mine was formed that blew up the whiggish ramparts, and opened a way for the Tories to the Queen. SWIFT was to the Tories, what CÆSAR was to the Romans, at once a leader of their armies, and an historiographer of their triumphs. He resided very much in *England* : his inclinations were always there. His intimacy with Lord OXFORD commenced, as far as may be deduced from his works, in

*Oxford*

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 27

October 1709. In a poem written in the year 1713, he says,

*'Tis (let me see) three years and more  
(October next it will be four)  
Since HARLEY bid me first attend,  
And chose me for an humble friend.*

And again in another poem written in the same year,

*My Lord would carry on the jest,  
And down to Windsor take his guest.  
SWIFT much admires the place and air,  
And longs to be a Canon there.  
A Canon! that's a place too mean,  
No, Doctor, you shall be a Dean.*

By this last quotation, and by numberless other instances in his works, it seems undeniable that a settlement in England was the unvaried object of Dr. SWIFT's ambition: so that his promotion to a deanery in Ireland was rather a disappointment than a reward. In a letter to Mr. GAY, he says, "*The best and greatest part of my life, untill these last eight years, I spent in England. There I made my friendships, and there I left my desires. I am condemned for ever to another country:*" and in answer to a letter from Mr. POPE, who had offered incense to him, as to a tutelary saint in a state of

\* Letter 5. Vol. 7.

separation,



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separation, he writes thus, "You are an ill catholic, or a worse geographer; for I can assure you, Ireland is not paradise; and I appeal even to a Spanish divine, whether addresses were ever made to a friend in bell or purgatory?"<sup>a</sup> I shall cite no other quotations; but you will find in his letters many expressions to the same purport.

Among the various branches, into which SWIFT'S expansive genius spread itself, those peculiar talents of levelling his writings to the lowest, and sustaining their dignity to the highest capacity, were probably the original motives that attracted the Earl of OXFORD'S friendship to him. In the year 1709, the character of Dr. SWIFT, as an author, was perfectly established: he had shewn abilities equal to those attributed by HOMER to ULYSSES: he could appear a beggar among beggars, and a king among kings.

From the year 1710, to the latest period of Queen ANNE, we find him fighting on the side of the ministers, and maintaining their cause in pamphlets, poems, and weekly papers. In one of his letters to Mr. POPE he has this expression, "I have conversed in some freedom with more ministers of state, of all parties, than usually happens to men of my level; and I confess, in their capacity of ministers, I look upon them as a race of people whose acquaintance no man would court otherwise than on the score of vanity, or ambition."<sup>b</sup> Lord OXFORD, as a gentleman, and a scholar, might be open and unreserved to Dr. SWIFT, as far as his Lordship's

<sup>a</sup> Letter 4. Vol. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Letter 4. Vol. 7.

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 29

nature would permit; but as a minister of state he ever appeared mysterious and ænigmatical, delivering his oracles, like the Delphian Deity, in occult terms and ambiguous expressions.

A man always appears of more consequence to himself, than he is in reality to any other person. Such perhaps was the case of Dr. SWIFT. He found himself much indulged by the smiles, and conversation of the Earl of OXFORD. He knew how useful he was to the administration in general: and in one of his letters (I think the same which I have last quoted) he mentions, that the place of historiographer was intended for him; but I am apt to suspect that he flattered himself too highly: at least, it is very evident, that he remained without any preferment till the year 1713, when he was made Dean of *St. Patrick's*. In point of power and revenue, such a deanery might be esteemed no inconsiderable promotion; but to an ambitious mind, whose perpetual aim, was a settlement in *England*, a dignity in any other kingdom must appear (as perhaps it was designed) only an honourable, and profitable banishment.

But, my HAMILTON, I will never hide the freedom of my sentiments from you. I am much inclined to believe that the temper of my friend SWIFT might occasion his *English* friends to wish him happily and properly promoted, at a distance. His spirit, for I would give it the softest name, was ever untractable. The notions of his genius were often irregular. He assumed more the air of a patron, than of a friend. He affected rather to dictate than advise. He was elated with the appearance

pearance of enjoying ministerial confidence. He enjoyed the shadow: the substance was detained from him. He was employed, not trusted; and at the same time that he imagined himself a subtil diver, who dextrously shot down into the profoundest regions of politics, he was suffered only to sound the shallows nearest the shore, and was scarce admitted to descend below the froth at the top. Perhaps the deeper bottoms were too muddy for his inspection.

By reflexions of this sort we may account for his disappointment in an *English* bishoprick. A disappointment which, he imagined, he owed to a joint application made against him to the Queen by Dr. SHARPE, Archbishop of *York*, and by a Lady of the highest rank and character. Archbishop SHARPE, according to Dr. SWIFT's account, had represented him to the Queen, as a person who was not a Christian; the great Lady had supported the aspersions; and the Queen, upon such assurances, had given away the bishoprick, contrary to her Majesty's first intentions. SWIFT kept himself indeed within some tolerable bounds, when he spoke of the Queen: but his indignation knew no limits, when he mentioned the Archbishop, or the Lady.

Business and ceremony, (two commanders, that I hope you will list under much more willingly than I can) call me away from my letter, although nothing can ever call away my thoughts from you, or interrupt the tenderness with which I am, dear HAMILTON,

*Your affectionate Father,*

G R R E R Y.

L E T.

\*\*\*\*\*  
L E T T E R V.

**M**OST people, my dear HAM, are fond of a settlement in their native country: but Dr. SWIFT had little reason to rejoice in the land where his lot had fallen: for, upon his arrival in *Ireland* to take possession of the deanery, he found the violence of party raging in that kingdom to the highest degree. The common people were taught to look upon him as a jacobite; and they proceeded so far in their detestation, as to throw stones and dirt at him as he passed through the streets. The chapter of *St. Patrick's*, like the rest of the kingdom, received him with great reluctance. They thwarted him in every point that he proposed. He was avoided as a pestilence. He was opposed as an invader. He was marked out as an enemy to his country. Such was his first reception as Dean of *St. Patrick's*. Fewer talents, and less firmness, must have yielded to so outrageous an opposition, *sed contra audentior ibat*. He had seen enough of human nature, to be convinced, that the passions of low, self-interested minds, ebb and flow continually. They love they know not whom, they hate they know not why: they are captivated by words: guided by names: and governed by accidents. *SACHEVRELL and the*

## 32. REMARKS ON THE LIFE.

*Church* had been of as great service to one party in the year 1710, as *Papery and Slavery* were to the other in the year 1713. But, to shew you the strange revolutions in this world, Dr. SWIFT, who was now the detestation of the *Irish* rabble, lived to be afterwards the most absolute monarch over them that ever governed men.

His first step was to reduce to reason and obedience his reverend brethren the chapter of *St. Patrick's*: in which he succeeded so perfectly, and so speedily, that in a short time after his arrival, not one member of that body offered to contradict him, even in trifles. On the contrary, they held him in the highest respect and veneration; so that he sat in the Chapter-house, like JUPITER in the Synod of the Gods. Whether fear or conviction were the motives of so immediate a change, I leave you to consider, but certain it is

*Viro Phœbi chorus affurrexerit omnis.*

SWIFT made no longer a stay in *Ireland*, in the year 1713, than was requisite to establish himself as Dean, and to pass through certain customs and formalities, or as he himself words,

*Through all vexations,  
Patents, Instalments, Abjurations,  
First Fruits, and Tenths, and Chapter-Treats,  
Dues, Payments, Fees, Demands, and—Cheats.*

During

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 43

During the time of these ceremonies he kept a constant correspondence with his friends in *England*: all of whom were eminent, either in birth, station, or abilities. Among these, let me begin with the name of Mr. POPE. The world has already seen a long series of their correspondence: but a remarkable letter of Mr. POPE's having been lately communicated to me, and bearing date at the latter end of the year 1713, as I cannot part with the original, I will send you a very faithful copy of it. I should first say, that it is in answer to one from SWIFT, wherein he had jocosely made an offer to his friend of a sum of money, *ex causa religionis*, or, in plain english, to induce Mr. POPE to change his religion. The wit of the letter itself will excuse all farther commentaries.

Binfield, December 8, 1713.

S I R,

**N**OT to trouble you at present with a recital of all my obligations to you, I shall only mention two things, which I take particularly kind of you: your desire that I should write to you, and your proposal of giving me twenty guineas to change my religion, which last you must give me leave to make the subject of this letter.

Sure no clergyman ever offered so much out of his own purse for the sake of any religion. 'Tis almost as many pieces of gold, as an Apostle could get of silver from the priests of old, on a much more valuable consideration. I believe it will be better worth my while to propose a change of my faith by subscription, than a translation of

HOMER. *And to convince you, how well disposed I am to the reformation, I shall be content, if you can prevail with my Lord Treasurer, and the ministry, to rise to the same sum, each of them, on this pious account, as my Lord HALIFAX has done on the profane one. I am afraid there's no being at once a poet and a good Christian, and I am very much straitened between two, while the Whigs seem willing to contribute as much, to continue me the one, as you would, to make me the other. But, if you can move every man in the government, who has above ten thousand pounds a year, to subscribe as much as yourself, I shall become a convert, as most men do, when the LORD turns it to my interest. I know they have the truth of religion so much at heart, that they'd certainly give more to have one good subject translated from popery to the church of England, than twenty Heathenish authors out of any unknown tongue into ours. I therefore commission you, Mr. DEAN, with full authority, to transact this affair in my name, and to propose as follows. First, that as to the head of our church, the Pope, I may engage to renounce his power, whensoever I shall receive any particular indulgences from the head of your church, the Queen.*

*As to communion in one kind, I shall also promise to change it for communion in both, as soon as the ministry will allow me.*

*For invocations to saints, mine shall be turned to dedications to sinners, when I shall find the great ones of this world as willing to do me any good, as I believe those of the other are.*

*You see I shall not be obstinate in the main points; but there is one article I must reserve, and which you seem*

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 35

not unwilling to allow me, prayer for the dead. There are people to whose souls I wish as well as to my own; and I must crave leave humbly to lay before them, that though the subscriptions abovementioned will suffice for myself, there are necessary perquisites and additions, which I must demand on the score of this charitable article. It is also to be considered, that the greater part of those, whose souls I am most concerned for, were unfortunately heretics, schismatics, poets, painters, or persons of such lives and manners, as few or no churches are willing to save. The expence will therefore be the greater to make an effectual provision for the said souls.

Old DRYDEN, though a Roman Catholic, was a poet; and 'tis revealed in the visions of some ancient saints, that no poet was ever saved under some hundred of masses. I cannot set his delivery from purgatory at less than fifty pounds sterling.

WALSH was not only a Socinian, but (what you'll own is harder to be saved) a Whig. He cannot modestly be rated at less than an hundred.

L'ESTRANGE, being a Tory, we compute him but at twenty pounds, which I hope no friend of the party can deny to give, to keep him from damning in the next life, considering they never gave him sixpence to keep him from starving in this.

All this together amounts to one hundred and seventy pounds.

In the next place, I must desire you to represent, that there are several of my friends yet living, whom I design, God willing, to outlive, in consideration of legacies; out of which it is a doctrine in the reformed church, that not



*a farthing shall be allowed to save their souls who gave them.*

*There is one \* \* \* \* who will dye within these few months, with \* \* \* \* \* one Mr. JERVAS, who hath grievously offended in making the likenes of almost all things in heaven above and earth below; and one Mr. GAY, an unhappy youth, who writes pastorals during the time of divine service, whose case is the more deplorable, as he hath miserably lawished away all that silver he should have reserved for his soul's health, in buttons and loops for his coat.*

*I can't pretend to have these people honestly saved under some hundred pounds, whether you consider the difficulty of such a work, or the extreme love and tenderneſs I bear them, which will infallibly make me push this charity as far as I am able. There is but one more whose salvation I insist upon, and then I have done: but indeed it may prove of so much greater charge than all the rest, that I will only lay the case before you and the ministry, and leave to their prudence and generosity, what sum they shall think fit to bestow upon it.*

*The person I mean, is Dr. SWIFT; a dignified clergyman, but one, who, by his own confession, has composed more libels than sermons. If it be true, what I have heard often affirmed by innocent people, That too much wit is dangerous to salvation, this unfortunate gentleman must certainly be damned to all eternity. But, I hope his long experience in the world, and frequent conversation with great men, will cause him (as it has some others) to have less and less wit every day. Be it as it will, I should not think*

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 237

*think my own soul deserved to be saved, if I did not endeavour to save his ; for I have all the obligations in nature to him. He has brought me into better company than I cared for, made me merrier when I was sick than I had a mind to be, and put me upon making poems on purpose, that he might alter them &c.*

*I once thought I could never have discharged my debt to his kindness, but have lately been informed, to my unspeakable comfort, that I have more than paid it all. For, MONSIEUR DE MONTAGNE has assured me, " that the person who receives a benefit obliges the giver : " since the chief endeavour of one friend is to do good to the other, he who administers both the matter and occasion, is the man who is liberal. At this rate it is impossible Dr. SWIFT should be ever out of my debt, as matters stand already : and, for the future, he may expect daily more obligations from*

*his most faithful, affectionate*

*humble servant*

A. POPE

*I have finished the Rape of the Lock, but I believe I may stay here till Christmas, without hindrance of business.*

In the beginning of the year 1714, SWIFT returned to England. He found his great friends, who sat in the seat of power, much disunited among themselves. He saw the Queen declining in her health, and dis-

### 38. REMARKS ON THE LIFE

pressed in her situation : while faction was exerting itself, and gathering new strength every day. The part which he had to act upon this occasion, was not so difficult, as it was disagreeable. He exerted the utmost of his skill to reunite the ministers, and to cement the apertures of the state. I could descend into very minute particulars, were I to tell you what I have heard him say upon this occasion : but, my dearest HAM, let me speak to you with my usual sincerity. We are at present too near that æra, and have had too many unexpected consequences from it, either to judge impartially, or to write undauntedly, of those tempestuous times. Be contented if I tell you, that as soon as SWIFT found his pains fruitless, his arguments unavailing, and his endeavours, like the stone of SISYPHUS, rolling back upon himself, he retired to a friend's house in *Berkshire*, where he remained till the Queen died. So fatal a catastrophe put a final period to all his views in *England*, and made him return, as fast as possible, to his deanery in *Ireland*, loaded with those agonizing passions, grief and discontent. I am sorry to leave him in so uneasy a situation, but I must hasten to subscribe myself,

*Your affectionate Father*

O R R E R Y.

L E T.



## LETTER VI.

**W**E are now, dear HAMILTON, no longer to behold Dr. SWIFT of any importance in *England*: his hopes there are crushed for ever: his ministerial friends are degraded, banished, or imprisoned. Indecent rage, sanguinary zeal, and ill-tempered loyalty revelled at large throughout the three kingdoms, especially in *Ireland*, where duels were fought almost every week, and where the pest was so universal, that the ladies were as violent as the gentlemen. Even children at school quarrelled for Kings, instead of fighting for apples.

As SWIFT was known to have been attached to the Queen's last ministry, to have written against the Whigs, and "to have oiled many a spring which HANLEY moved," he met with frequent indignities from the populace, and indeed was equally abused by persons of all ranks and denominations. Such a treatment soured his temper, confined his acquaintance, and added bitterness to his style: and, since the future part of his life and writings is to differ, in all circumstances, so widely from the past, since his studies and companions, his politics and his customs, are now to be altered and exchanged for new habits, new friends, new ambition, and

## 40 REMARKS ON THE LITERATURE

and a new world, suffer me, my HAM, to take a general review of him as an author.

If we consider his prose works, we shall find a certain masterly conciseness in their style, that has never been equalled by any other writer. The truth of this assertion will more evidently appear by comparing him with some of the authors of his own time. Of these Dr. TILLOTSON, and Mr. ADDISON, are to be numbered among the most eminent. ADDISON has all the powers that can captivate and improve: his diction is easy, his periods are well turned, his expressions are flowing, and his humour is delicate. TILLOTSON is nervous, grave, majestic, and perspicuous. We must join both these characters together to form a true idea of Dr. SWIFT: yet as he outdoes ADDISON in humour, he excels TILLOTSON in perspicuity. The Archbishop indeed confined himself to subjects relative to his profession: but ADDISON and SWIFT are more diffusive writers. They continually vary in their manner, and treat different topics in a different style. When the writings of ADDISON terminate in party, he loses himself extremely, and from a delicate, and just comedian, deviates into one of the lowest kind\*. Not so Dr. SWIFT; he appears like a masterly gladiator. He wields the sword of party with ease, justness and dexterity: and while he entertains the ignorant and the vulgar, he draws an equal attention from the learned and the great. When he is serious, his gravity be-

\* See the papers entitled the Freeholder.

comes

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 41

comes him. When he laughs, his readers must laugh with him. But, what shall be said for his love of trifles, and his want of delicacy and decorum? Errors, that if he did not contract, at least he encreased in *Ireland*. They are without a parallel. I hope they will ever remain so. The first of them arose meerly from his love of flattery, with which he was daily fed in that kingdom: the second proceeded from the misanthropy of his disposition, which induced him peevishly to debase mankind, and even to ridicule human nature itself. Politics were his favourite topic, as they gave him an opportunity of gratifying his ambition, and thirst of power: yet even in this road, he seldom continued long in one particular path. He has written miscellaneously, and has chosen rather to appear a wandering comet, than a fixed star. Had he applied the faculties of his mind to one great, and useful work, he must have shined more gloriously, and might have enlightened a whole planetary system in the political world.

The poetical performances of Dr. SWIFT ought to be considered as occasional poems written either to please, or vex some particular persons. We must not suppose them designed for posterity: if he had cultivated his genius in that way, he must certainly have excelled, especially in satir. We see fine sketches, in several of his pieces: but he seems more desirous to inform, and strengthen his mind, than to indulge the luxuriancy of his imagination. He chooses to discover, and correct errors in the works of others, rather than  
to

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to illustrate, and add beauties to his own. Like a skilful artist, he is fond of probing wounds to their depth, and of enlarging them to open view. He prefers caustics, which erode proud flesh, to softer balsamics, which give more immediate ease. He aims to be severely useful, rather than politely engaging: and as he was either not formed, or would not take pains to excel in poetry, he became, in some measure, superior to it; and assumed more the air and manners of a critic, than of a poet. Had he lived in the same age with HORACE, he would have approached nearer to him, than any other poet: and if we may make an allowance for the different course of study, and different form of government, to which each of these great men were subject, we may observe, in several instances, a strong resemblance between them. Both poets are equally distinguished for wit and humour. Each displays a peculiar felicity in diction: but of the two, HORACE is the more elegant and delicate: while he condemns, he pleases. SWIFT takes pleasure in giving pain: the dissimilitude of their tempers might be owing to the different turns in their fortune. SWIFT early formed large views of ambition, and was disappointed. HORACE, from an exiled low state rose into affluence, and enjoyed the favour and friendship of AUGUSTUS. Each poet was the delight of the principal persons of his age. *Cum magnis vixisse* was not more applicable to HORACE, than to SWIFT. They both were temperate: both were frugal; and both were of the same Epicurean taste, HORACE had his LYDIA, SWIFT

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 43

SWIFT had his VANESSA. HORACE had his MÆCENAS and his AGRIPPA. SWIFT had his OXFORD, and his BOLINGBROKE. HORACE had his VIRGIL, SWIFT had his POPE.

After the great names, which I have just now mentioned, it is matter of astonishment to find the same person, who had enjoyed the highest, and the best conversation, equally delighted with the lowest and the worst: and yet it is certain, from SWIFT's settlement in *Dublin* as Dean of St. Patrick's, his choice of companions in general shewed him of a very depraved taste.

From the year seventeen hundred and fourteen, till he appeared in the year twenty a champion for *Ireland* against Wood's halfpence, his spirit of politics, and of patriotism, was kept almost closely confined within his own breast. Idleness and trifles engrossed too many of his hours: fools and sycophants too much of his conversation. However, let me observe to you, that the treatment which he received, after the death of Queen ANN, was almost a sufficient reason to justify a contempt, if not an abhorrence, of the human race. He had bravely withstood all hostile indignities, during the life time of that Princess; but when the whole army of his friends were not only routed, but taken prisoners, he dropt his sword, and retired into his fortification at *Dublin*, from whence he seldom stirred beyond the limits of his own garden, unless in great indulgence to some particular favourites.

His attendance upon the public service of the church was  
regular



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regular and uninterrupted : and indeed regularity was peculiar to him in all his actions, even in the greatest trifles. His hours of walking, and reading, never varied : His motions were guided by his watch, which was so constantly held in his hand, or placed before him upon his table, that he seldom deviated many minutes, in the daily revolution of his exercises and employments. His works, from the year 1714, to the year 1720, are few in number, and of small importance. Poems to STELLA, and trifles to Dr. SHERIDAN, fill up a great part of that period.

In the year 1720, he began to re-assume, in some degree, the character of a political writer. A small pamphlet *in defence of the Irish manufactures*, was, I believe, his first essay (in *Ireland*) in that kind of writing : and to that pamphlet, he owed the turn of the popular tide in his favour<sup>a</sup>. His sayings of wit and humour had been handed about, and repeated from time to time among the people. They had the effect of an artful preface, and had pre-engaged all readers in his favour. They were adapted to the understanding, and pleased the imagination of the vulgar : and he was now looked upon in a new light, and distinguished by the title of THE DEAN.

The flux and reflux of popular love and hatred are equally violent. They are often owing to accidents, but sometimes to the return of reason, which, unassisted by education, may not be able to guide the lower class

<sup>a</sup> See Letter 16th.

of people, into the right track at the beginning, but will be sufficient to keep them in it, when experience has pointed out the road. The pamphlet, proposing the universal use of *Irish* manufactures *within the kingdom*, had captivated all hearts. *Some little pieces of poetry to the same purpose* were no less acceptable and engaging. The attachment which the Dean bore to the true interest of *Ireland*, was no longer doubted. His patriotism was as manifest as his wit. He was looked upon with pleasure and respect, as he passed through the streets: and he had attained so high a degree of popularity, as to become an arbitrator in the disputes of property among his neighbours: nor did any man dare to appeal from his opinion, or to murmur at his decrees.

But the popular affection, which the Dean had hitherto acquired, may be said not to have been universal, till the publication of the *DRAPIER's letters*; which made all ranks, and all professions unanimous in his applause. The occasion of those letters was a scarcity of copper coin in *Ireland*, to so great a degree, that for some time past the chief manufacturers throughout the kingdom were obliged to pay their workmen in pieces of tin, or in other tokens of supposititious value. Such a method was very disadvantageous to the lower parts of traffic, and was in general an impediment to the commerce of the state. To remedy this evil, the late King granted a patent to WILLIAM WOOD, to coin, during the term of fourteen years, farthings and halfpence in *England* for the use of *Ireland*, to the value of a certain

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sum specified. These halfpence and farthings were to be received by those persons, who would voluntarily accept them. But the patent was thought to be of such dangerous consequence to the public, and of such exorbitant advantage to the patentee, that the DEAN, under the character of M. B. DRAPIER, wrote a letter to the people, warning them not to accept WOOD's halfpence and farthings as current coin. This first letter was succeeded by several others to the same purpose, all which are inserted in his works.

At the sound of the DRAPIER's trumpet, a spirit arose among the people, that, in the eastern phrase, *was like unto a tempest in the day of the whirlwind*. Every person of every rank, party, and denomination, was convinced, that the admission of WOOD's copper must prove fatal to the commonwealth. The Papist, the Fanatic, the Tory, the Whig, all lifted themselves volunteers under the banner of M. B. DRAPIER, and were all equally zealous to serve the common cause. Much heat, and many fiery speeches against the administration, were the consequence of this union: nor had the flames been allayed, notwithstanding threats and proclamations, had not the coin been totally suppressed, and had not WOOD withdrawn his patent.

This is the most succinct account that can be given of an affair, which alarmed the whole *Irish* nation to a degree that in a less loyal kingdom must have fomented a rebellion: but the steadfast loyalty of the *Irish*, and their true devotion to the present royal family is immovable: and although this unfortunate nation

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 47

tion may not hitherto have found many distinguishing marks of favour and indulgence from the throne; yet it is to be hoped, in time they may meet with their reward.

The name of AUGUSTUS was not bestowed upon OCTAVIUS CÆSAR with more universal approbation, than the name of THE DRAPIER was bestowed upon THE DEAN. He had no sooner assumed his new *cognomen*, than he became the idol of the people of Ireland to a degree of devotion, that in the most superstitious country scarce any idol ever obtained. Libations to his health, or, in plain english, bumpers were poured forth to the DRAPIER as *large* and as *frequent* as to the *glorious and immortal memory of K. WILLIAM the third*. His effigies was painted in every street in *Dublin*. Acclamations and vows for his prosperity attended his footsteps wherever he passed. He was consulted in all points relating to domestic policy in general, and to the trade of *Ireland* in particular: but he was more immediately looked upon as the legislator of the weavers, who frequently came in a body, consisting of fifty or sixty chieftains of their trade, to receive his advice, in settling the rates of their manufactures, and the wages of their journeymen. He received their addresses with less majesty than sternness, and ranging his subjects in a circle round his parlour, spoke as copiously, and with as little difficulty and hesitation, to the several points in which they supplicated his assistance, as if trade had been the only study and employment of his life. When elections were depending for the city of *Dublin*, many

E

corporations

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corporations refused to declare themselves, till t  
had consulted his sentiments and inclinations, wh  
were punctually followed with equal cheerfulness  
submission. In this state of power, and popular l  
and admiration, he remained till he lost his senses  
loss which he seemed to foresee, and prophetically  
mented to many of his friends\*.

I have now conducted the Dean through the most  
interesting circumstances of his life to the fatal per  
wherein he was utterly deprived of reason. If y  
curiosity leads you to enquire into the particulars  
that misfortune, it must be the subject of some fu  
letter: for, at present, I think it is time to indulge  
self in assuring you, that I am with an inexpress  
warmth of heart, my dear HAMILTON,

*Your most affectionate Father*

O R R E R

\* See Letter XXI.



# LETTER VII.

*My dear* HAMILTON,

YOU seem not only desirous, but impatient, that I should pass critically thorough all the works of my friend SWIFT. Your request is unreasonable if you imagine, that I must say something upon every individual performance. There are many pieces that I despise, others that I loath, and others again that delight and improve me. These last shall be discussed particularly. The former are not worthy of your notice. They are of no farther use than to shew us, in general, the errors of human nature ; and to convince us, that neither the height of wit, nor genius, can bring a man to such a degree of perfection, as vanity would often prompt him to believe.

In a disquisition of the sort which you require, I shall avoid as much as possible any annotations upon that kind of satir, in which the Dean indulged himself against particular persons : most of whom it is proba-

ble had provoked his rage by their own misconduct, and consequently owed to their own rashness the wounds which they received from his pen : but I have no delight in those kind of writings, except for the sake of the wit, which, either in general, or in particular satire, is equally to be admired. The edge of wit will always remain keen, and its blade will be bright and shining, when the stone, upon which it has been whetted, is worn out, or thrown aside and forgotten. Personal satire against evil magistrates, corrupt ministers, and those giants of power, who gorge themselves with the entails of their country, is different from that personal satire, which too often proceeds merely from self-love, or ill-nature : the one is written in defence of the public, the other in defence of ourselves. The one is armed by the sword of justice, and encouraged not only by the voice of the people, but by the principles of morality : the other is dictated by passion, supported by pride, and applauded by flattery. At the same time that I say this, I think every man of wit has a right to laugh at fools, who give offence, or at coxcombs, who are public nuisances. SWIFT indeed has left no weapon of sarcasm untried, no branch of satire uncultivated : but while he has maintained a perpetual war against the mighty men in power, he has remained invulnerable, if not victorious.

Upon a review of the Dean's writings, it cannot be sufficiently lamented, that there is no just, or perfect edition of his works. FAULKNER's edition, at least the  
four

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 51

four first volumes of it (for there are now eight) were published, by the permission and connivance, if not by the particular appointment of the Dean himself. But the several pieces are thrown together without any order or regularity whatever : so that like the ancient chaos which contained an immense collection of various treasures, they remain in their state of confusion *rudis indigestaque moles* : and yet the incoherency of situation is perhaps one of the most excusable faults in the collection : for the materials are of so different, and so incongruous a nature, that it seems as if the author, (who was in reality the editor,) imagined the public under an absolute necessity of accepting the basest coin from the same hand, that had exhibited the purest. Surely the idle amusements of a man's private and domestic life, are not to be sent forth as sufficient entertainments for the witty or the learned. Posthumous works indeed are often worthless and improper, from the ill judged zeal of ignorant executors, or imprudent friends : but, a living author remains without excuse, who either wilfully, or wantonly imposes upon the world.

The English edition of SWIFT's works I have scarce seen ; and I have had little inclination to examine it, because I was acquainted with the Dean, at the time when FAULKNER's edition came out, and therefore must always look upon that copy as most authentic ; well knowing that Mr. FAULKNER had the advantage of printing his edition, by the consent and approbation



of the author himself. The four first volumes were published by subscription, and every sheet of them was brought to the Dean for his revial and correction. The two next were published in the same manner. The seventh volume was printed from a number of surreptitious letters published in *England*: and the eighth volume did not come out till after the Dean's death. In the publication of the six first volumes, the situation and arrangement of each particular piece, in verse and prose, was left entirely to the editor. In that point, the Dean either could not, or would not give him the least assistance. The dates were often guessed at, and every scrap was thrust into the parcel that might augment the collection. Such a conduct has been productive of a confusion that offends the eye, and misleads the understanding. We have less pleasure in looking at a palace built at different times, and put together by ignorant workmen, than in viewing a plain regular building composed by a masterly hand in all the beauty of symmetry and order. The materials of the former may be more valuable, but the simplicity of the latter is more acceptable. For health and exercise who would not chuse rather to walk upon a platform than in a labyrinth } or, who does not wish to see an edition of SWIFT's works becoming the genius, and dignity of the author? When such an edition is undertaken, I should hope that all the *minutiæ* of his idle hours might be entirely excluded; or at least placed, like out buildings, at a distance from the chief edifices of state.

SWIFT

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SWIFT was naturally fond of seeing his works in print, and he was encouraged in this fondness by his friend Dr. SHERIDAN, who had the *cacoethes scribendi* to the greatest degree, and was continually letting off squibs, rockets, and all sorts of little fireworks from the press, by which means he offended many particular persons, who, although they stood in awe of SWIFT, held SHERIDAN at defiance. The truth is, the poor Doctor, by nature the most peaceable, inoffensive man alive, was in a continual state of warfare with the minor poets, and they revenged themselves, or, in the style of Mr. BAYS, often gave him *flash for flash*, and *singed his feathers*. The affection between THESEUS and PIRITHOUS was not greater than the affection between SWIFT and SHERIDAN: but the friendship that cemented the two ancient heroes probably commenced upon motives very different from those which united the two modern divines. As in a former letter, I drew a picture of SWIFT's wife \*, let me here give you some sketches of SWIFT's friend.

Dr. SHERIDAN was a schoolmaster, and, in many instances, perfectly well adapted for that station. He was deeply versed in the Greek and Roman languages; and in their customs and antiquities. He had that kind of good-nature, which absence of mind, indolence of body, and carelessness of fortune produce; and although not over strict in his own conduct, yet he took care of

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the morality of his scholars, whom he sent to the University remarkably well founded in all classical learning, and not ill instructed in the social duties of life. He was slovenly, indigent, and chearful. He knew books much better than men : and he knew the value of money least of all. In this situation, and with this disposition, SWIFT fastened upon him, as upon a prey with which he intended to regale himself, whenever his appetite should prompt him. SHERIDAN therefore was kept constantly within his reach : and the only time he was permitted to go beyond the limits of his chain, was to take possession of a living in the county of *Corke*, which had been bestowed upon him by the then Lord Lieutenant of *Ireland*, the present Earl of *Granville*. SHERIDAN, in one fatal moment, or by one fatal text, effected his own ruin. You will find the story told by SWIFT himself, in the fourth volume of his works<sup>b</sup> : so that here I need only tell you, that this ill-starred, good-natured, improvident man returned to *Dublin*, unhinged from all favour at court, and even banished from the castle. But still he remained a punster, a quibbler, a fiddler, and a wit. Not a day passed without a rebus, an anagram, or a madrigal. His pen and his fiddle-stick were in continual motion ; and yet to little or no purpose, if we may give credit to the

<sup>b</sup> Page 289. In a pamphlet entitled, *A Vindication of his Excellency JOHN Lord CARTERET from the charge of favouring none but Tories, High Churchmen, and Jacobites.*

follow-

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 55

following verses, which shall serve as the conclusion of his poetical character,

With music and poetry equally blest'd  
A bard thus APOLLO most humbly address'd,  
Great author of poetry, music, and light,  
Instructed by thee I both fiddle and write :  
Yet unheeded I scrape, or I scribble all day,  
My tunes are neglected, my verse flung away.  
Thy substitute here VICE-APOLLO<sup>c</sup> disdains  
To vouch for my numbers, or list to my strains.  
Thy manual sign he refuses to put  
To the airs I produce from the pen, or the gut.  
Be thou then propitious, great PHOEBUS, and grant  
Relief ; or reward to my merit, or want.  
Tho' the DEAN and DELANY<sup>d</sup> transcendently shine,  
O ! brighten one solo, or sonnet of mine.  
Make one work immortal ; 'tis all I request ;  
APOLLO look'd pleas'd, and resolving to jest  
Replied, honest friend, I've consider'd your case,  
Nor dislike your unmeaning and innocent face.  
Your petition I grant, the boon is not great,  
Your works shall continue, and here's the receipt,  
On<sup>e</sup> *Rounds* hereafter your fiddle-strings spend,  
Write verses in circles ; they never shall end.

<sup>c</sup> Dr. SWIFT.

<sup>d</sup> Now Dean of *Downe*.

<sup>e</sup> A song, or peculiar kind of poetry, which returns to the beginning of the first verse, and so continues in a perpetual rotation.

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In the course of my correspondence, my dear HAM, you may possibly observe some seeming contradictions, as I am pursuing the Dean through the mazy turnings of his character. But, they will easily be reconciled, when you consider, that, of all mankind, SWIFT perhaps had the greatest contrasts in his temper. He often put me in mind of that wild opinion, which PLUTARCH says was entertained by the sages of old, “ That we  
“ are subject to the influence of two principles, or  
“ deities, who are in constant opposition to each other :  
“ the one directing us to the right hand, and through  
“ the right road, the other driving us astray, and op-  
“ posing us from pursuing the track pointed out by his  
“ adversary.” The Manichean heresy, you know, was built upon this hypothesis : and it is not impossible (as the doctrine itself was propagated before the time of MANES) that some ancient speculative philosopher may have invented such a kind of mythology, merely to solve the various contradictions which he found fluctuating within his own breast.

You will possibly expect from me a collection of apophthegms, which the Dean may have uttered upon various occasions. But, the witty records of table-talk in my mind seem too minute and over curious ; at least I must wish to treat with you upon subjects of more importance. I mean such subjects as will teach you to follow some moral virtue, or to shun some moral evil.

Forgive me too, if I am now and then guilty of repetitions. In reviewing the same person so often, the  
same

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same thoughts, if not the same expressions, will inevitably occur. But, excuses for these kind of errors, are, I hope, unnecessary. Candour and truth are the chief points that I have had in view, knowing them to be coincident with your own manner of thinking.

You are now sufficiently prepared for that particular edition of SWIFT'S works, which I intend to pursue: and I shall undertake the performance with great pleasure and alacrity; because I flatter myself it may be acceptable to you, as it comes from

*your most affectionate Father*

ORRERY.



## LETTER VIII.

**I** Was very glad to be interrupted, by your unexpected visit. The sight of you, and the happiness which I constantly receive in your company, are recollected by me in your absence, with such a kind of inexpressible pleasure, as the warmest affection and the truest tenderness inspire: and as I am always earnest to comply

## 28 REMARKS ON THE LIFE

comply with your requests, I take the earliest opportunity of going on with a plan, that hitherto has received the encouragement of your filial partiality.

The first volume of FAULKNER's edition consists of various tracts jumbled together, without any regularity or order. The first treatise in this volume is intitled, *A discourse of the contests and dissensions between the nobles and commons in ATHENS and ROME*. It was written in the year 1701, towards the latter end of King WILLIAM's reign, and at a time, when that Prince was made extremely uneasy, by the violence with which some of his ministers, and chief favourites were pursued. However bright the crown of *England* might have glittered in the eyes of the Prince of *Orange*, he found it, when placed upon his head, a crown of thorns. The longer he wore the diadem, the bandelet still became more tight and irksome. Complaints, and enquiries arose in the senate. Feuds, and unchristian animosities, in the convocation. Nor had foreign affairs a more propitious aspect. Lewis the fourteenth was making large strides towards universal monarchy. Plots were carrying on at St. GERMAIN'S. The *Dutch* had acknowledged the Duke of ANJOU as King of SPAIN: and EUROPE in general seemed pregnant of fire, and ready to burst into flames. Thus began the year 1701. King WILLIAM in hopes to dispel this sulphureous body of clouds, which seemed to threaten some future thunder of extraordinary violence, had made several changes in his ministry, and had removed some of his faithfullest servants from places of the highest trust and dignity. The alteration

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 59

iteration proved of little or no effect. The animosity of the house of commons could not be appeased. They looked upon the loss of lucrative employments, as an insufficient punishment for high crimes and misdemeanours: and they began first by impeaching the Earl of PORTLAND<sup>a</sup>; and then proceeded to the impeachments of Lord SOMERS<sup>b</sup>, the Earl of ORFORD<sup>c</sup>, and the Earl of HALLIFAX<sup>d</sup>.

These were all great men; and the three last were of remarkable abilities and experience. Lord SOMERS was the general patron of the *literati*, and the particular friend of DR. SWIFT. The Earl of ORFORD had been considered in a manner as lord high admiral; the whole affairs of the navy having been committed to his charge. Lord HALLIFAX had a fine genius for poetry, and had employed his more youthful part of life in that science. He was distinguished by the name of MOUSE MOUNTAGUE, having ridiculed, jointly with MAT PRIOR, MR. DRYDEN's famous poem of the Hind and Panther. The parody is drawn from HORACE's fable of the City Mouse and Country Mouse, and begins,

<sup>a</sup> WILLIAM BENTINCK, Earl of PORTLAND, Groom of the Stole.

<sup>b</sup> JOHN SOMERS, Baron SOMERS of Evesham. First, Lord Keeper: afterwards, Lord High Chancellor.

<sup>c</sup> EDWARD RUSSEL, Earl of ORFORD, Treasurer of the Navy, and one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

<sup>d</sup> CHARLES MOUNTAGUE, Earl of HALLIFAX, appointed one of the Commissioners of the Treasury; and afterwards made Chancellor of the Exchequer.



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*A milk white mouse, immortal and unchang'd,  
Fed on soft cheese, and o'er the dairy rang'd.*

But afterwards, upon Mr. MOUNTAGUE's promotion to the chancellorship of the Exchequer, PRIOR, with a good humoured indignation at seeing his friend preferred, and himself neglected, concludes an epistle written in the year 1698, to FLEETWOOD SHEPHERD, Esq; with these three lines,

*My friend CHARLES MOUNTAGUE's prefer'd,  
Nor wou'd I have it long observ'd,  
That one Mouse eats, while t'other's starv'd.*

}

You will find the characters of the four impeached lords described under *Athenian* names. PHOCION is the Earl of PORTLAND. ARISTIDES is Lord SOMERS. THEMISTOCLES is the Earl of ORFORD. PERICLES is the Earl of HALLIFAX. In parallels of this sort, it is impossible that every circumstance should tally with the utmost exactness: but the whole treatise is full of historical knowledge, and excellent reflexions. It is not mixed with any improper fallies of wit, or any light airs of humour; and in point of style and learning, is equal, if not superior, to any of his political works.

Subsequent to *the discourse concerning Athens and Rome* is a paper written in the year 1703, in derision of the style and manner of Mr. ROBERT BOYLE. To what a height must the spirit of sarcasm arise in an author, who

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who could prevail upon himself to ridicule so good a man as Mr. BOYLE? The sword of wit, like the scythe of time, cuts down friend and foe, and attacks every object that accidentally lies in its way. But, sharp and irresistible as the edge of it may be, Mr. BOYLE will always remain invulnerable.

*The sentiments of a church-of-England-man, with respect to religion and government*, was written in the year 1708. It is adapted to that particular period. The style of the whole pamphlet is nervous, and, except in some few places, impartial. The state of *Holland* is so justly, and, at the same time, so concisely delineated, that I cannot help transcribing it. Speaking of the *Dutch*, the author says, "*They are a commonwealth founded on a sudden, by a desperate attempt in a desperate condition, not formed or digested into a regular system by mature thought and reason, but buddled up under the pressure of sudden exigencies; calculated for no long duration, and hitherto subsisting by accident in the midst of contending powers, who cannot yet agree about sharing it amongst them.*" This tract is very well worth your reading and attention: and it confirms an observation which will perpetually occur, that SWIFT excels in whatever style or manner he assumes. When he is in earnest, his strength of reason carries with it conviction. When in jest, every competitor in the race of wit is left behind him.

*The argument against abolishing Christianity* is carried on with the highest wit and humour. Graver divines threaten their readers with future punishments: SWIFT artfully

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artfully exhibits a picture of present shame. He judged rightly in imagining that a small treatise, written with a spirit of mirth and freedom, must be more efficacious, than long sermons, or laborious lessons of morality. He endeavours to laugh us into religion, well knowing, that we are often laughed out of it. As you have not read the pamphlet, excuse a quotation, to which may be prefixed the old proverb *ex pede Herculem*. “ *I would fain know* (says the Dean) *how it can be pretended, that the churches are misapplied. Where are more appointments and rendezvouses of gallantry? Where more care to appear in the foremost box with greater advantage of dress? Where more meetings for business? Where more bargains driven of all sorts? And where so many conveniencies or incitements to sleep?* ”

The papers which immediately follow are entirely humorous, and relate to PARTRIDGE the almanac maker: and although they are not only temporary, but local, yet by an art peculiar to SWIFT himself, they are rendered immortal, so as to be read with pleasure, as long as the English language subsists.

To these succeeds *A project for the advancement of religion, and the reformation of manners*, written in the year 1709, and dedicated to the Countess of BERKLEY. The author appears in earnest throughout the whole treatise, and the dedication, or introduction, is in a strain of serious panegyric, which the Lady, to whom it is addressed, undoubtedly deserved. But as the pamphlet is of the satirical kind, I am apt to imagine, that my friend the Dean put a violence upon himself, in chusing

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 65

chusing to appear candidly serious, rather than to laugh silently under his usual mask of gravity. Read it, and tell me your opinion: for methinks, upon these occasions, I perceive him writing in shackles.

*The critical essay on the faculties of the mind*, will make you smile.

*The letter to the Earl of OXFORD for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English tongue* might have been a very useful performance, if it had been longer, and less eclipsed by compliments to the noble person to whom it is addressed. It seems to have been intended as a preface to some more enlarged design: at the head of which such an introduction must have appeared with great propriety. A work of this kind is much wanted, as our language, instead of being improved, is every day growing worse, and more debased. We bewilder ourselves in various orthography; we speak, and we write at random; and if a man's common conversation were to be committed to paper, he would be startled for to find himself guilty in a few sentences, of so many solecisms and such false English. I believe we are the only people in the Christian world, who repeat the Lord's Prayer, in an ungrammatical manner: and I remember to have heard, that when a motion was made in the Convocation to alter the word [which] for the word [who] the proposition was rejected by the majority. This instance may shew you of what sort of men, the most learned, and even the most reverend assemblies, are sometimes composed. But let us consider the conduct of a neighbouring nation. How industrious have

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the French been to improve their language? and to what a state of perfection have they brought it? *Rome*, by her conquests, made her dialect universal: *France*, by her policy, has done the same. By policy, I mean the encouragement of arts and sciences; which will often render a nation more powerful than arms. Nothing has contributed so much to the purity and excellence of the French tongue, as the noble academies established for that purpose: and, until some public work of the same kind is undertaken in *England*, we cannot flatter ourselves with any hopes of amending the errors, or ascertaining the limits of our style. I shall not presume even to whisper to you, that I think a design of this sort is sufficiently momentous to attract the consideration of our legislative powers. Their thoughts are otherways employed, and their faculties otherways applied. But I will venture to say, that if to our hospitals for lunatics, an hospital was added for the reception, and support of men of sense and learning, it would be of the highest honour to the present age, and of no less advantage to posterity. I call it an hospital, because I suppose it to be erected for the benefit of such persons, whose infirm fortunes, or diseased revenues, may have rendered the strength and abilities of their minds weak and useless to the public: for I entirely agree with ARISTOTLE, where he says, in the words of his scholiast. *Eum præclara et magna vix posse exequi et præstare, cui facultates desunt: quoniam per amicos et civilem potentiam veluti per instrumenta necesse est pleraque effici.* The reflexions, that arise from this theme, I find,

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find, are driving me beyond the bounds of a letter: therefore I shall only add, that I heartily wish you may think an attention to your native language as useful, and improving a study, as can be pursued, in whatever station of life Providence may allot you.

There are two other letters in this volume extremely worthy of your notice. The one is, *To a young gentleman lately entered into holy orders*. The other is, *To a young lady on her marriage*. The former ought to be read by all the young clergymen in the three kingdoms, and the latter by all the new married women. But, here again is the peculiar felicity of SWIFT's writings; the letters are addressed only to a young clergyman and a young lady, but they are adapted to every age and understanding. They contain observations that delight and improve every mind; and they will be read, with pleasure and advantage, by the oldest, and most exemplary divines, and by the most distinguished, and most accomplished ladies.

The rest of the volume is filled up with short tracts, and papers of various sorts: mostly humorous, and entertaining. You will laugh at the story in one of the *Intelligencers*, of *Whisk* and *Sawobbers*: and you will wish the *Tastler* on those inferior duties of life, called *Les petites Morales*, hung up in every 'squire's hall in England. I am, my dearest HAMILTON,

*Your most affectionate Father*

O R R E R Y.

F 2

L E T.



## LETTER IX.

WE are now come, my dear HAMILTON, to the second volume of SWIFT's works. It is filled with poetry: but the poems in general are short and satirical. The poem of the greatest length, and, I believe, the longest ever composed by Dr. SWIFT, is of a very extraordinary nature, and upon a very extraordinary subject. It is called CADENUS and VANESSA. As a poem, it is excellent in its kind, perfectly correct, and admirably conducted. SWIFT, who had the nicest ear, is remarkably chaste and delicate in his rhymes. A bad rhyme appeared to him one of the capital sins in poetry; and yet it is a sin into which some of our greatest poets have fallen. DRYDEN frequently: POPE sometimes. The former was embarrassed with a wife and family, and was often under such necessary circumstances as to be obliged to publish, or to want subsistence. The latter was in a less confined, and in a much more easy situation: he was naturally judicious, and uncommonly attentive to maintain the dignity of his character. Although his body was weak, his mind was equal to the weight of his laurel crown;

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 69

crown; and he wore it not only with ease, but majesty. Take him as a poet, *we shall not see his like again*. But why do I keep you in suspense? you are impatient, I dare say, to know some particulars of VANESSA. Her real name was ESTHER VANHOMRIGH<sup>a</sup>. She was one of the daughters of BARTHOLOMEW VANHOMRIGH, a Dutch merchant of *Amsterdam*, who, upon the revolution, went into *Ireland*, and was appointed, by King WILLIAM, a commissioner of the revenue. Her mother, whose name I forget, was born in *Ireland*, of very mean extraction. The Dutch merchant, by parsimony and prudence, had collected a fortune of about sixteen thousand pounds: he bequeathed an equal division of it to his wife and his four children, of which two were sons, and two were daughters. The sons, after the death of their father, travelled abroad. The eldest died beyond sea, and the youngest surviving his brother only a short time, the whole patrimony fell to his two sisters, ESTHER and MARY.

With this increase of wealth, and with heads and hearts elated by affluence, and unrestrained by foresight or discretion, the widow VANHOMRIGH and her two daughters quitted the illuxurious soil of their native country for the more elegant pleasures of the English court. During their residence at *London*, they lived in a course of prodigality that stretched itself far beyond the limits of their income, and reduced them to great

<sup>a</sup> The name is pronounced VANNUMMERY.



distress ; in the midst of which the mother died, and the two daughters hastened in all secrecy back to *Ireland*, beginning their journey on a Sunday, to avoid the interruption, and importunities of a certain fierce kind of animals called bailiffs, who are not only sworn foes to wit and gaiety, but whose tyranny, although it could not have reached the deified VANESSA, might have been very fatal to ESTHER VANHOMRIGH. Within two years after their arrival in *Ireland*, MARY the youngest sister died, and the small remains of the shipwrecked fortune centered in VANESSA.

Vanity makes terrible devastation in a female breast. It batters down all restraints of modesty, and carries away every seed of virtue. VANESSA was excessively vain. The character given of her by CADENUS is fine painting, but, in general, fictitious. She was fond of dress : impatient to be admired : very romantic in her turn of mind : superior, in her own opinion, to all her sex : full of pertness, gaiety, and pride : not without some agreeable accomplishments, but far from being either beautiful or genteel : ambitious, at any rate, to be esteemed a wit ; and, with that view, always affecting to keep company with wits : a great reader, and a violent admirer of poetry : happy in the thoughts of being reputed SWIFT's concubine : but still aiming and intending to be his wife. By nature haughty, and disdainful, looking with the pity of contempt upon her inferiors, and with the smiles of self-approbation upon her equals : but upon Dr. SWIFT with the eyes  
of

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 71

of love. Her love was founded in vanity, or, to use a more fashionable phrase, *in taste*. His own lines are the best proof of my assertion.

CADENUS *many things had writ ;*

VANESSA *much esteem'd his wit,*

*And call'd for his poetic works ;*

*Mean time the boy <sup>a</sup> in secret lurks,*

*And while the book was in her hand,*

*The urchin, from his private stand,*

*Took aim, and shot with all his strength*

*A dart of such prodigious length ;*

*It pierc'd the feeble volume thro',*

*And deep transfix'd her bosom too.*

*Some lines, more moving than the rest,*

*Stuck to the point that pierc'd her breast ;*

*And borne directly to her heart*

*With pains unknown increas'd the smart.*

VANESSA, *not in years a score,*

*Dreams of a gown of forty four ;*

*Imaginary charms can find,*

*In eyes, with reading, almost blind :*

CADENUS *now no more appears*

*Declin'd in health, advanc'd in years :*

*She fancies music in his tongue,*

*Nor further looks, but thinks him young.*

The poem itself is dated in the year 1713, when SWIFT was in his meridian altitude ; favoured by the

\* CUPID:

F 4

courtiers ;

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courtiers; flattered, feared, and admired by the greatest men in the nation.

By the verses which I have already recited, it may be presumed, that the lady was first smitten with the fame and character of CADENUS, and afterwards with his person. Her first thoughts pursued a phantom. Her later passion desired a substance. The manner in which she discovered her inclinations, is poetically described in these lines.

*She own'd the wand'ring of her thoughts,  
But he must answer for her faults.  
She well remember'd, to her cost,  
That all his lessons were not lost:  
Two maxims she cou'd still produce,  
And sad experience taught their use:  
That virtue, pleas'd by being shown,  
Knows nothing which it dare not own:  
Can make us, without fear, disclose  
Our inmost secrets to our foes:  
That common forms were not design'd  
Directors to a noble mind.  
Now, said the nymph, to let you see,  
My actions with your rules agree;  
That I can vulgar forms despise,  
And have no secrets to disguise,  
I knew, by what you said and writ,  
How dang'rous things were men of wit;*

*Yes*

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 73

*You caution'd me against their charms,  
But never gave me equal arms:  
Your lessons found the weakest part,  
Aim'd at the head, and reach'd the heart.*

Supposing this account to be true, and I own to you, my HAM, I can scarce think it otherwise, it is evident, that the fair VANESSA had made a surprising progress in the philosophic doctrines, which she had received from her preceptor. His rules were certainly of a most extraordinary kind. He taught her, that vice, as soon as it defied shame, was immediately changed into virtue. That vulgar forms were not binding upon certain *choice spirits*, to whom either the writings, or the persons of men of wit were acceptable. She heard the lesson with attention, and imbibed the philosophy with eagerness. The maxims suited her exalted turn of mind. She imagined that if the theory appeared so charming, the practice must be much more delightful. The close connexion of soul and body seemed to require, in the eye of a female philosopher, that each should succeed the other in all pleasurable enjoyments. The former had been sufficiently regaled, why must the latter remain unsatisfied? "Nature, said VANESSA, "abhors a *vacuum*, and nature ought always to be "obeyed." She communicated these sentiments to her tutor, but he seemed not to comprehend her meaning, nor to conceive the *distinctio rationis* that had taken rise in his own school. He answered her in the non-

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*essential modes.* He talked of friendship, of the delights of reason, of gratitude, respect and esteem. He almost preached upon virtue, and he muttered some indistinct phrases concerning chastity.

So unaccountable a conduct in CADENUS may be thought rather to proceed from defects in nature, than from the scrupulous difficulties of a tender conscience. Such a supposition will still appear more strong, if we recollect the distant manner in which SWIFT cohabited with STELLA, colder, if possible, after, than before, she was his wife : and I now recollect some of his own lines that seem to confirm the surmise, as they contain an insinuation against VANESSA, not perhaps so much intended to wound her reputation, as to save his own.

*But what success VANESSA met*

*Is to the world a secret yet.*

*Whether the nymph, to please her swain,*

*Talks in a high romantic strain ;*

*Or whether he at last descends,*

*To act with less seraphic ends ;*

*Or to compound the business, whether*

*They temper love and books together,*

*Must never to mankind be told,*

*Nor shall the conscious muse unfold.*

It is impossible to read this cruel hint without great indignation against the *conscious muse*, especially as it is the finishing stroke of a picture, which was already drawn

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 75

drawn in too loose a garment, and too unguarded a posture. In this instance, I am afraid the Dean must remain inexcusable.

VANESSA, in some time after the death of her sister, retired to *Selbridge*, a small house and estate that had been purchased by her father, within ten or twelve miles of *Dublin*. Spleen and disappointment were the companions of her solitude. The narrowness of her income, the coldness of her lover, the loss of her reputation, all contributed to make her miserable, and to increase the frenzied disposition of her mind. In this melancholy situation she remained several years, during which time CADENUS visited her frequently. Their particular conversation, as it passed without witnesses, must for ever remain unknown : but, in general, it is certain, that she often pressed him to marry her. His answers were rather turns of wit than positive denials ; till at last, being unable to sustain her weight of misery any longer, she writ a very tender epistle to CADENUS, insisting peremptorily upon as serious an answer, and an immediate acceptance, or absolute refusal of her, as his wife. His reply was delivered by his own hand. He brought it with him when he made his final visit at *Selbridge* : and throwing down the letter upon her table, with great passion hastened back to his horse, carrying in his countenance the frowns of anger and indignation.

Dr. SWIFT had a natural severity of face, which even his smiles could scarce soften, or his utmost gaiety render

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render placid and serene : but when that sternness of visage was encreased by rage, it is scarce possible to imagine looks, or features, that carried in them more terror and austerity. VANESSA had seen him in all tempers, and from his outward appearance she guessed at the inward contents of his letter. She read it with as much resolution as the present cruelty of her fate, and the raging pride of her heart, would permit. She found herself entirely discarded from his friendship and conversation. Her offers were treated with insolence and disdain. She met with reproaches instead of love, and with tyranny instead of affection. She had long thrown away the gentle lenitives of virtue ; which, upon this occasion, might have proved healing ingredients to so deep, and so dangerous a wound. She had preferred wit to religion, she had utterly destroyed her character, and her conscience : and she was now fallen a prey to the horror of her own thoughts.

*Tum vero infelix fatis exterrita Dido  
Mortem orat : tædet cæli convexa tueri.*

She did not survive many days the letter delivered to her by CADENUS, but, during that short interval, she was sufficiently composed, to cancel a will made in SWIFT's favour, and to make another, wherein she left her fortune (which, by long retirement, was in some measure retrieved) to her two executors, Dr. BERKLEY, the present Bishop of Cloyne, and Mr. MARSHAL, one  
of

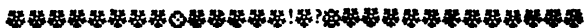
## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 77

of the King's Serjeants at law. She had chosen Mr. MARSHAL, not only as he had an excellent character, but as he was her relation. She had little personal acquaintance with Dr. BERKLEY: his virtues, and his genius, were universally known: yet other motives perhaps induced her to appoint him a joint executor: in such an appointment, she probably designed to mortify the pride of Dr. SWIFT, by letting him see, that, in her last thoughts, she preferred a stranger before him.

Thus perished, at *Selbridge*, under all the agonies of despair, Mrs. ESTHER VANHOMRIGH; a miserable example of an ill-spent life, fantastic wit, visionary schemes, and female weakness.

My paper scarce allows room for the affectionate name of

O R R E R Y.



## L E T T E R X.

*My dear HAMILTON,*

I Have received yours of the 24th instant. You seem so much pleased with the commentaries relating to VANESSA, and you have expressed so much satisfaction in my account of STELLA, that probably you wish SWIFT to have had as many wives and mistresses as SOLOMON, in order to furnish me with perpetual materials  
for



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for the history of a Lady. It is true, my friend the Dean kept company with many of the fair sex, but they were rather his amusement than his admiration. He trifled away many hours in their conversation, he filled many pages in their praise, and by the power of his head, he gained the character of a lover, without the least assistance from his heart. To this particular kind of pride supported by the bent of his genius, and joined to the excessive coldness of his nature, VANESSA owed the ruin of her reputation, and from the same causes; STELLA remained an unacknowledged wife. If we consider SWIFT's behaviour, so far only as it relates to women, we shall find, that he looked upon them rather as busts, than as whole figures. In his panegyrical descriptions, he has seldom descended lower than the center of their hearts: or if ever he has designed a compleat statue, it has been generally cast in a dirty; or in a disagreeable mould: as if the statuary had not conceived, or had not experienced, that justness of proportion, that delicacy of limb, and those pleasing, and graceful attitudes which have constituted the sex to be the most beautiful part of the creation. If you review his several poems to STELLA, you will find them fuller of affection than desire, and more expressive of friendship than of love. For example,

*Thou, STELLA, wert no longer young,  
When first for thee my harp I strung;  
Without one word of CUPID's darts,  
Of killing eyes, or bleeding hearts:*

*With*

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 79.

*With friendship and esteem possess  
I ne'er admitted Love a guest.*

Most of the poems, which are absolutely addressed to STELLA, or which describe her in a variety of attitudes, turn upon her age: a kind of excuse perhaps for SWIFT's want of love.

I began one of my former letters, my dear HAMILTON, by a declaration that it was impossible for me to pass a very minute comment upon the various pieces that he has written; and I must renew the same declaration in regard to his poems. They are not only mingled improperly, in points of dates, and subjects, but many, very many of them, are temporary, trifling, and I had almost said puerile. Several of them are personal, and consequently scarce amusing; or at least, they leave a very small impression upon our minds. Such indeed as are likely to draw your attention, are exquisite, and so peculiarly his own, that whoever has dared to imitate him in these, or in any of his works, has constantly failed in the attempt. Upon a general view of his poetry, we shall find him, as in his other performances, an uncommon, surprizing, heteroclite genius, luxurious in his fancy, lively in his ideas, humorous in his descriptions, and bitter, exceeding bitter in his satire. The restlessness of his imagination, and the disappointment of his ambition, have both contributed to hinder him from undertaking any poetical work of length or importance. His wit was sufficient to every labour:

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no flight could have wearied the strength of his pinions: perhaps if the extensive views of his nature had been fully satisfied, his airy motions had been more regular, and less sudden. But he now appears, like an eagle that is sometimes chained, and at that particular time, for want of nobler, and more proper food, diverts his confinement, and appeases his hunger, by destroying the gnats, butterflies, and other wretched insects, that unluckily happen to buzz, or flutter within his reach.

While I have been reading over this volume of his poetry, I have considered him as an *Ægyptian* hieroglyphic, which, though it had an unnatural, and frequently an indecent appearance, yet it always contained some secret marks of wisdom, and sometimes of deep morality. The subjects of his poems are often nauseous, and the performances beautifully disagreeable.

*The Lady's Dressing Room* has been universally condemned, as deficient in point of delicacy, even to the highest degree. The best apology that can be made in its favour, is to suppose, that the author exhibited his *Cætera* in the most hideous colours he could find, lest she might be mistaken as a goddess, when she was only a mortal. External beauty is very alluring to youth and inexperience; and SWIFT, by pulling off the borrowed plumes of his harpy, discovers at once a frightful bird of prey, and by making her offensive, renders her less dangerous and inviting. Such, I hope, was his design; but let his views and motives have been ever so beneficial,

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 82

cial, his general want of delicacy and decorum must not hope to find even the shadow of an excuse; for it is impossible not to own, that, he too frequently forgets that politeness and tenderness of manners, which are undoubtedly due to human kind. From his early, and repeated disappointments, he became a misanthrope. If his mind had been more equal and content, I am willing to believe, that he would have viewed the works of nature with a more benign aspect. And perhaps, under a less constant rotation of anxiety, he might have preserved his senses to the last scene of life, and might have enjoyed that calm *exit* from the stage, for which his friend HORACE so earnestly supplicates APOLLO.

*Erui paratis et valido mihi  
Latoî dones, et, precor, integrâ  
Cum mente, nec turpem sensum,  
Degero, nec citharâ carentem,*

I have already told you, that his pride was so great as scarce to admit any body to the least share of his friendship, except such who could amuse him, or such who could do him honour. To these two different classes we owe many of his poems. His companions and humble followers, had themselves immortalized by the insertion of their names in addresses to STELLA, or in other miscellaneous pieces written in an easy, although not in a careless manner. His more exalted friends, whose stations and characters did him honour, are treated in a different style; and you will perceive a

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real dignity, and a most delicate kind of wit in all his poems to Lord OXFORD, Lord PERSHORE, Lord CARTERET<sup>a</sup>, Mr. PULTNEY<sup>b</sup>, and I think I may particularly add, in a poem to the Countess of WINTERSHAW<sup>c</sup>, and another to Mrs. BRADY FLOODE. These names abetted him in his pursuit of fame. They reflected back the glory which he gave. But, all I cannot recollect one poem, nay, scarce a couplet, to his noble patron Lord BOLINGBROKE. In that instance he has been as silent, as VIRGIL has been to HORACE, and yet he certainly had not a grain of envy in his composition.

I think I can discern a third kind of style in his poems addressed to Mr. POPE, Mr. GAY, Dr. DELANY, and Dr. YOUNG. When he writes to them, there is a mixture of ease, dignity, familiarity, and affection. They were his intimate friends, whom he loved sincerely, and whom he wished to accompany into the poetical regions of eternity.

I have just now cast my eye over a poem called *Death and Daphne*, which makes me recollect an odd incident relating to that nymph. SWIFT, soon after our acquaintance, introduced me to her, as to one of his female favourites. I had scarce been half an hour in her company, before she asked me, if I had seen the Dean's poem upon *Death and Daphne*. As I told her I had not, she immediately unlocked a cabinet, and bringing out

<sup>a</sup> Now Earl of GRANVILLE.

<sup>b</sup> Now Earl of BATH.

<sup>c</sup> Under the name of ARIZIA:

the

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 83

the manuscript, read it to me with a seeming satisfaction, of which, at that time, I doubted the sincerity. While she was reading, the Dean was perpetually correcting her for bad pronounciation, and for placing a wrong emphasis upon particular words. As soon as she had gone thorough the composition, she assured me smilingly, that the portrait of DAPHNE was drawn for herself: I begged to be excused from believing it; and protested that I could not see one feature that had the least resemblance; but the Dean immediately burst into a fit of laughter. "You fancy, says he, that you are very polite, but you are much mistaken. That Lady had rather be a DAPHNE drawn by me, than a SACHARISSA by any other pen-cil." She confirmed what he had said, with great earnestness, so that I had no other method of retrieving my error, than by whispering in her ear, as I was conducting her down stairs to dinner, that indeed I found

*"Her hand as dry and cold as lead."*

You see the command which SWIFT had over all his females; and you would have smiled to have found his house a constant seraglio of very virtuous women, who attended him from morning till night, with an obedience, an awe, and an assiduity, that are seldom paid to the richest, or the most powerful lovers; no, not even to the Grand Seignior himself.

To these Ladies SWIFT owed the publication of many pieces, which ought never to have been delivered to the press. He communicated every composition as soon as finished, to his female senate, who, not only

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passed their judgement on the performance, but constantly asked, and almost as constantly obtained, a copy of it. You cannot be surprized that it was immediately afterwards seen in print: and when printed, became a part of his works. He lived much at home, and was continually writing, when alone. Not any of his Senators presumed to approach him when he signified his pleasure to remain in private, and without interruption. His nightgown and slippers were not easier put on or off, than his attendants. No Prince ever met with more flattery to his person, or more devotion to his mandates. This despotic power not only blinded him, but gave a loose to passions that ought to have been kept under a proper restraint. I am sorry to say, that whole nations are sometimes sacrificed to his resentment. Reflexions of that sort appear to me the least justifiable of any kind of satyr. You will read his *Acerrima* with indignation, and his *Minutiae* with regret. Yet I must add, that since he has descended so low as to write, and, still so much lower, as to print riddles, he is excellent even in that kind of versification. The lines are smoother, the expressions are neater, and the thought is closer pursued than in any other *riddle-writer* whatever. But, SWIFT composing riddles is TITIAN painting draught-boards, which must have been inexcusable, while there remained a sign-post painter in the world.

At the latter end of the volume you will find two Latin poems. The first, *An Epistle to Dr. SHERRIDAN*; the last, *A description of the rocks at Garbery in Ireland*.

The

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 85

The Dean was extremely solicitous, that they should be printed among his works: and what is no less true than amazing, he assumed to himself more vanity upon these two Latin poems, than upon many of his best English performances. It is said, that MILTON in his own judgement preferred the *Paradise regained* to the *Paradise lost*. There possibly might be found some excuse for such a preference, but in SWIFT's case there can be none. He understood the Latin language perfectly well, and he read it constantly, but he was no Latin poet. And if the *Carberia rupta*, and the *Epistola ad THOMAM SHERIDAN*, had been the produce of any other author, they must have undergone a severe censure from Dr. SWIFT.

Here I shall dismiss this volume of his poems, which has drawn me into a greater length of letter than I intended. Adieu, my HAM, believe me ever

*Your affectionate Father*

O R R E R Y.



## LETTER XI.

*My dear HAMILTON,*

THE third volume of SWIFT's works contains *The travels of LEMUEL GULLIVER into several remote nations of the world*. They are divided into four parts; the first, a voyage to *Lilliput*; the second, a



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voyage to *Brobdingnag*; the third, to *Laputa* and other islands; the fourth, and most extraordinary, to the country of the *Huysbubbers*. These voyages are intended as a moral political romance, in which SWIFT seems to have exerted the strongest efforts of a fine irregular genius. But while his imagination and his wit delight, the venomous strokes of his satire, although in some places just, are carried into so universal a severity, that not only all human actions, but human nature itself is placed in the worst light. Perfection in every attribute is not indeed allotted to particular men: but, among the whole species, we discover such an assemblage of all the great, and amiable virtues, as may convince us, that the original order of nature contains in it the greatest beauty. It is directed in a right line, but it deviates into curves and irregular motions, by various attractions, and disturbing causes. Different qualifications shine out in different men. BACON and NEWTON (not to mention BOYLE) shew the divine extent of the human mind: of which power SWIFT could not be insensible; but as I have often told you, his disappointments rendered him splenetic, and angry with the whole world.

Educación, habit, and constitution, give a surprising variety of characters; and, while they produce some particular qualities, are apt to check others. Fortitude of mind seldom attends a sedentary life: nor is the man, whose ambitious views are crossed, scarce ever afterwards induced with benevolence of heart. The same mind, that is capable of exerting the greatest virtue,

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we, by some defect in the first steps of education often degenerates into the greatest vice. These effects take their source from causes almost mechanical. The soul, in our present situation, is blended and enclosed with corporeal substance, and the matter of which our body is composed, produces strange impulses upon the mind : but the instances that might illustrate, and explain the different effects arising from this formation, would carry me into a digression too extensive for my present plan.

To correct vice, by shewing its deformity in opposition to the beauty of virtue, and to amend the false systems of philosophy, by pointing out the errors, and applying salutary means to avoid them, is a noble design. This was the general intent, I would fain flatter myself, of my hieroglyphic friend.

GULLIVER's travels are chiefly to be looked upon as an irregular essay of SWIFT's peculiar wit and humour. Let us take a view of the two first parts together. The inhabitants of *Lilliput* are represented, as if reflected from a convex mirror, by which every object is reduced to a despicable minuteness. The inhabitants of *Brobdingnag*, by a contrary mirror, are enlarged to a shocking deformity. In *Lilliput* we behold a set of puny insects, or animalcules in human shape, ridiculously engaged in affairs of importance. In *Brobdingnag* the monsters of enormous size are employed in trifles.

LEMUEL GULLIVER has observed great exactness in the just proportion, and appearances of the several objects thus lessened and magnified : but he dwells too much upon these optical deceptions. The mind is tired

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with a repetition of them, especially as he points out no beauty, nor use in such amazing discoveries, which might have been so continued as to have afforded improvement, at the same time that they gave astonishment. Upon the whole, he too often shews an indelicacy that is not agreeable, and exerts his vein of humour most improperly in some places, where (I am afraid) he glances at religion.

In his description of *Lilliput*, he seems to have had *England* more immediately in view. In his description of *Blefuscu* he seems to intend the people and kingdom of *France*: yet the allegory between these nations is frequently interrupted, and scarce any where compleat. Several just strokes of satire are scattered here and there upon errors in the conduct of our government: and, in the sixth chapter of his voyage to *Brebbingnag*, he gives an account of the political state of *Europe*: his observations are delivered with his usual spirit of humour and severity. He appears most particularly affected with the proceedings of the courts of judicature, and complains of being almost ruined by a Chancery suit, which was *determined in his favour with costs*. It must be confessed, that instances of this kind are too frequent in our courts of justice, and they leave us no room to boast of the execution of our present laws, however excellent the laws, in their own original foundation, may have been. *Judgement, when turned into wormwood, is bitter*, but delays, as Lord BACON observes, turn it into vinegar: it becomes sharp, and corroding: and certainly it is more eligible to die immediately by the wound

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 89

wound of an enemy, than to decay lingering by poison, administered from a seeming friend.

The seventh chapter of the voyage to *Brobdignag* contains such farcasms on the structure of the human body, as too plainly shew us, that the author was unwilling to lose any opportunity of debasing and ridiculing his own species.

Here a reflexion naturally occurs, which, without any superstition, leads me tacitly to admire, and confess the ways of Providence : for this great genius, this mighty wit, who seemed to scorn and scoff at all mankind, lived not only to be an example of pride punished in his own person, and an example of terror to the pride of others ; but lived to undergo some of the greatest miseries to which human nature is liable. The particulars of this assertion will appear, by copying a letter which one of his relations sent to me, in answer to my enquiries after his situation.

Dublin, November 22, 1742.

My LORD,

**T**HE easy manner, in which you reproach me for not acquainting you with the poor Dean's situation, lays a fresh obligation upon me ; yet mean as an excuse is for a fault, I shall attempt one to your Lordship, and only for this reason, that you may not think me capable of neglecting any thing you could command me. I told you in my last letter, the Dean's understanding was quite gone, and I feared the farther particulars would only shock the tenderness of your nature, and the melancholy scene make your heart ach, as it has often done mine. I was the last person whom he knew,  
and

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and when that part of his memory failed, he was so outrageous at seeing any body, that I was forced to leave him, nor could he rest for a night or two after seeing any person : so that all the attendance which I could pay him was calling twice a week to enquire after his health, and to observe that proper care was taken of him, and durst only look at him while his back was towards me, fearing to discompose him. He walked ten hours a day, would not eat or drink if his servant stayed in the room. His meat was served up ready cut, and sometimes it would lie an hour on the table before he would touch it, and then eat it walking. About six weeks ago, in one night's time, his left eye swelled as large as an egg, and the lid Mr. NICHOLS (his surgeon) thought would mortify, and many large boils appeared upon his arms and body. The torture he was in, is not to be described. Five persons could scarce hold him for a week from tearing out his own eyes : and, for near a month, he did not sleep two hours in twenty four : yet a moderate appetite continued ; and what is more to be wondered at, the last day of his illness, he knew me perfectly well, took me by the hand, called me by my name, and shewed the same pleasure as usual in seeing me. I asked him, if he would give me a dinner ? He said, to be sure, my old friend. Thus he continued that day, and knew the Doctor and Surgeon, and all his family so well, that Mr. NICHOLS thought it possible he might return to a share of understanding, so as to be able to call for what he wanted, and to bear some of his old friends to amuse him. But alas ! this pleasure to me was but of short duration ; for the next day or two it was all over, and proved to be only pain that had roused him.

He

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*He is now free from torture: his eye almost well; very quiet, and begins to sleep; but cannot, without great difficulty, be prevailed on to walk a turn about his room: and get in this way the Physicians think he may hold out for some time. I am, my Lord,*

Your Lordship's most obedient  
humble servant,

M. WHITEWAY.

What a stocking; what a melancholy account is this; of how small estimation must the greatest genius appear in the sight of God!

About a year and a half afterwards, I received a letter from another of his relations, DEANE SWIFT, Esq; in answer to a report, which I had mentioned to him, of Dr. SWIFT's having viewed himself (as he was led across the room) in a glass, and crying out, "O poor old man!" The letter is written long after the Dean had been totally deprived of reason.

Dublin, April 4, 1744.

My LORD,

*AS to the story of O poor old man! I enquired into it. The Dean did say something upon his seeing himself in the glass, but neither Mrs. RIDGEWAY, nor the lower servants could tell me what it was he said. I desired them to recollect it, by the time when I should come again to the deanery. I have been there since, they cannot recollect it. A thousand stories have been invented of him within these two years; and imposed upon the world. I thought*

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*thought this might have been one of them : and yet I am now inclined to think, there may be some truth in it : for on Sunday the 17th of March, as he sat in his chair, upon the housekeeper's moving a knife from him as he was going to catch at it, he shrugged his shoulders, and, rocking himself, said, I am what I am, I am what I am : and, about six minutes afterwards, repeated the same words two or three times over.*

*His servant shaves his cheeks, and all his face as low as the tip of his chin, once a week : but under the chin, and about the throat, when the hair grows long, it is cut with scissors.*

*Sometimes he will not utter a syllable : at other times he will speak incoherent words : but he never yet, as far as I could hear, talked nonsense, or said a foolish thing.*

*About four months ago he gave me great trouble : he seemed to have a mind to talk to me. In order to try what he would say, I told him, I came to dine with him, and immediately his housekeeper, Mrs. RIDGEWAY, said, Won't you give Mr. SWIFT a glass of wine, Sir ? he shrugged his shoulders, just as he used to do when he had a mind that a friend should not spend the evening with him. Shrug-ging his shoulders, your Lordship may remember, was as much as to say, " You'll ruin me in wine." I wish, I was scarce able to bear the sight. Soon after, he again endeavoured, with a good deal of pain, to find words to speak to me : at last, not being able, after many efforts, he gave a heavy sigh, and, I think, was afterwards silent. This puts me in mind of what he said about five days ago. He endeavoured several times to speak to his servant (now and then*

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*then he calls him by his name) at last, not finding words to express what he would be at, after some uneasiness, he said, "I am a fool." Not long ago, the servant took up his watch that lay upon the table to see what o'clock it was, he said, "Bring it here:" and when it was brought, he looked very attentively at it: some time ago, the servant was breaking a large stubborn coal, he said, That's "a stone, you blockhead."*

*In a few days, or some very short time, after guardians had been appointed for him, I went into his dining room, where he was walking, I said something to him very insignificant, I know not what; but instead of making any kind of answer to it, he said, "Go, go," pointing with his hand to the door, and immediately afterwards, raising his hand to his head, he said, "My best understanding," and so broke off abruptly, and walked away. I am, my Lord,*

Your Lordship's most obedient,

and most humble servant,

DEANE SWIFT.

These two letters will not probably occasion in you very chearful speculations. Let us return back therefore to the *Lilliputians*, and the *Brobdingnagians*; where you will find many ridiculous adventures, even such as must have excited mirth in HERACLITUS. Where intricacies do not intervene, the narrative is very entertaining and humorous. Several just strokes of satire are scattered up and down upon political errors in government. In some parts, GULLIVER seems to have had

partic



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particular incidents, if not particular persons; in his view. His observations on education are useful: and so are his improvements on the institutions of LYCORGES. Upon reading over the two first parts of these travels, I think that I can discover a very great resemblance between certain passages in GULLIVER'S voyage to *Lilliput*, and the voyage of CYRANO DE BERGERAC to the sun and moon.

CYRANO DE BERGERAC is a French author of a singular character, who had a very peculiar turn of wit and humour, in many respects resembling that of SWIFT. He wanted the advantages of learning, and a regular education: his imagination was less guarded, and correct, but more agreeably extravagant. He has introduced into his philosophical romance, the system of DESCARTES (which was then much admired) intermixt with several fine strokes of just satire on the wild, and immechanical enquiries of the philosophers, and astronomers of that age: and in many parts he has evidently directed the plan, which the Dean of St. PATRICK'S has pursued.

I am sorry; and yet, in candour, I ought to observe, that GULLIVER, in his voyage to *Lilliput*, dares even to exert his vein of humour so liberally, as to place the resurrection (one of the most encouraging principles of the Christian religion) in a ridiculous, and contemptible light\*. Why should that appointment be denied to man; or appear so very extraordinary in the human-kind, which the Author of nature has illustrated in the

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 95

vegetable species, where the seed dies and corrupts, before it can rise again to new beauty and glory? But I am writing out of my province; and that I may be tempted no farther, here let me end the criticism upon the two first parts of GULLIVER'S travels, the conclusion of which, I mean GULLIVER'S escape from BRONDONAGO, is humorous, satirical, and decent. I am, my dearest HAM, by duty and inclination,

*Your best Friend,*

*and most affectionate Father*

O R R E R Y.

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## L E T T E R XII.

*My dear HAMILTON,*

**T**HE third part of GULLIVER'S travels is in general written against chymists, mathematicians, mechanics, and projectors of all kinds.

SWIFT was little acquainted with mathematical knowledge, and was prejudiced against it, by observing the strange effects it produced in those, who applied themselves entirely to that science. No part of human literature has given greater strength to the mind, or has produced greater benefits to mankind, than the several branches of learning that may pass under the general denomination of mathematics. But the abuses of this study, the idle, thin, immechanical refinements of it, are just subjects of satire. The real use of know-  
ledge

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ledge is to invigorate, not to enervate the faculties of reason. Learning degenerates into a species of madness, when it is not superior to what it possesseth. The scientific powers are most evident, when they are capable of exerting themselves in the social duties of life: when they wear no chains, but can freely disengage themselves, and like a sound constitution of body, rise chearful, and more vigorous by the food they have acquired, being neither oppressed, nor rendered stupid by the labours of digestion.

Lord BACON has justly exposed the vain pursuits of ostentatious pedants in the different parts of learning, and their unaccountable temerity in deducing general rules from arbitrary maxims, or few experiments: he has likewise fixed upon a sure and certain basis, the procedure and limits of the human understanding. SWIFT has pursued the same plan in a different manner, and has placed the imaginary schemes of all pretenders, in a more ludicrous, and therefore in a more proper light.

### *Ridiculum acri*

*Fortius ac melius magnas plerumque secât res.*

He cannot be supposed to condemn useful experiments, or the right application of them: but he ridicules the vain attempts, and irregular productions of those rash men, who, like Ixion, embracing a cloud instead of a goddess, plagued the world with centaurs, whilst JUPITER, from the embraces of a JUNO, and an ALCMENA, blessed the earth with an HEBE, and an HERCULES.

However

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 97

However wild the description of the *flying island*, and the manners, and various projects of the philosophers of *Lagado* may appear; yet it is a real picture embellished with much latent wit and humour. It is a satire upon those astronomers and mathematicians, who have so entirely dedicated their time to the planets, that they have been careless of their family and country, and have been chiefly anxious, about the œconomy and welfare of the upper worlds. But if we consider SWIFT's romance in a serious light, we shall find him of opinion, that those determinations in philosophy, which at present seem to the most knowing men to be perfectly well founded and understood, are in reality unsettled, or uncertain, and may perhaps some ages hence be as much decried, as the axioms of ARISTOTLE are at this day. Sir ISAAC NEWTON and his notions may hereafter be out of fashion. There is a kind of mode in philosophy, as well as in other things: and such modes often change more from the humour and caprice of man, than either from the unreasonable, or the ill-founded conclusions of the philosophy itself. The reasonings of some philosophers have undoubtedly better foundations than those of others: but I am of opinion (and SWIFT seems to be in the same way of thinking) that the most applauded philosophy hitherto extant has not fully, clearly, and certainly explained many difficulties in the phænomena of nature. I am induced to believe, that God may have absolutely denied us the perfect knowledge of many points in philosophy,

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lophony, so that we shall never arrive at that perfection, however certain we may suppose ourselves of having attained to it already. Upon the whole, we may say with TULLY, *Omnibus ferè in rebus, et maxime in physicis quid non sit citius, quam quid sit, dixerim.*

The project for a more easy and expeditious method of writing a treatise in any science, by a wooden engine<sup>a</sup>, it entertainingly satirical, and is aimed at those authors, who, instead of receiving materials from their own thoughts and observations, collect from dictionaries and common place-books, an irregular variety, without order, use or design,

*Ut nec pes nec caput uni  
Reddatur forma.*

The project of shortning a discourse, by cutting polysyllables into one, and leaving out verbs and participles<sup>b</sup>, is pointed at the pernicious custom of contracting the English language, the dialect of which is naturally harsh, and that harshness is still encreased by improper contractions. As SWIFT was scrupulously exact in the pronounciation of his own tongue, not the least improper expression ever escaped his censure: and I remember to have seen in manuscript a dictionary of hard words, composed by him for the use of his female senate.

<sup>a</sup> Page 218.

<sup>b</sup> Page 220.

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The sixth chapter <sup>a</sup> is full of severity and satire. Sometimes it is exerted against the legislative power: sometimes against particular politicians: sometimes against women: and sometimes it degenerates into filth. True humour ought to be kept up with decency, and dignity, or it loses every tincture of entertainment. Descriptions that shock our delicacy cannot have the least good effect upon our minds. They offend us, and we fly precipitately from the sight. We cannot stay long enough to examine, whether wit, sense, or morality, may be couched under such odious appearances. I am sorry to say, that these sort of descriptions, which are too often interspersed throughout all SWIFT's works, are seldom written with any other view, or from any other motive, than a wild unbridled indulgence of his own humour and disposition.

He seems to have finished his voyage to LAPUTA in a careless hurrying manner, which makes me almost think that sometimes he was tired of his work, and attempted to run through it as fast as he could; otherwise why was the curtain dropped so soon? or why were we deprived of so noble a scene as might have been discovered in the island of *Glubdubdrib*<sup>b</sup>, where the governor, by his skill in necromancy, had the power of calling whom he pleased from the dead? I have not time by this post to write to you my thoughts upon a subject, which I confess awakened, but by no means satisfied my curiosity. I lamented to find so many il-

<sup>a</sup> Page 223.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 7. Page 252.

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lustrious ghosts vanish so quickly, and so abruptly from my sight, many of whom were of the brightest characters in history. In my next letter I shall endeavour to detain them a little longer in *Leicester-fields*, than SWIFT suffered them to stay in the island of Sorcerers.

*I am,*

*My dear HAMILTON,*

*Your affectionate Father,*

O R R E R Y.



L E T T E R      XIII.

*My dearest HAMILTON,*

**I** Believe it would be impossible to find out the design of Dr. SWIFT, in summoning up a parcel of apparitions, that from their behaviour, or from any thing they say, are almost of as little consequence, as the ghosts in GAY's farce of the *What d'ye call it*. Perhaps, SWIFT's general design might be, to arraign the conduct of eminent persons after their death, and to convey their names, and images to posterity, deprived of those false colours, in which they formerly appear-  
ed.

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 101

ed. If these were his intentions, he has missed his aim; or at least, has been so far carried away by his disposition to raillery, that the moral, which ought to arise from such a fable, is buried in obscurity.

The first airy substance introduced is ALEXANDER the Great<sup>a</sup>. After a hint from GULLIVER, that we have lost the true Greek idiom, the conqueror of the universe is made to declare upon his honour, “*That he died by excessive drinking, not by poison.*” A trifling, and an improper observation; because the apparition is called up as he appeared at the head of his army, just after the battle of Arbela. I own my expectations were great, when I found his appearance was to be at such a remarkable juncture: and I particularly wished to see him properly introduced after that battle, as the compassion and generosity which he shewed to the family of DARIUS, was highly worthy of imitation. There are other circumstances in the historical records of him, that redound to his honour. His tender regard to PINDAR, by sparing the house of that poet (when he rased the city of *Thebes*) seems to demand perpetual gratitude from all succeeding bards. The manner in which he visited the tomb of ACHILLES: the affection and respect paid by him to ARISTOTLE; the undaunted confidence placed in his physician PHILIP, are instances sufficient to shew, that ALEXANDER did not want some virtues of humanity; and when we consider several of his rash actions of ebriety, they convince us, how far the native excellencies of the mind

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 7. Page 234.



may be debased and changed by passions which too often attend success and luxury,

*Utcunque defecere mores,  
Dedecorant bene nata culpæ.*

It is evident, my HAM, that SWIFT had conceived an absolute disgust to ALEXANDER, whose character he aims to destroy, by touching it in so slight a manner, that he puts me in mind of the visit paid by AUGUSTUS CÆSAR, to ALEXANDER's sepulchre at *Alexandria*. Upon the Emperor's arrival, the body of the Macedonian hero was found in its full dimensions, but so tender, notwithstanding all the former embalming, that CÆSAR, by touching only the nose of it, defaced the whole figure immediately.

HANNIBAL<sup>a</sup> seems to have been summoned with no other view than to censure LIVY the historian. It is not only improbable, but impossible, that HANNIBAL should have carried a sufficient quantity of vinegar for the purpose related by LIVY: but as vinegar will certainly soften, and dissolve stones, the experiment might have been improved, or so contrived by HANNIBAL, as to appear to make an easy, and expeditious opening through some particular passage, already fitted for the purpose. Such a trial, practised in that age of darkness, and properly managed, might have been universally received as a kind of miracle: so that LIVY could scarce have avoided inserting the report as an acknowledged truth: especially when the fact itself seems to

infer

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 103

infer that the Romans were invincible, unless from some supernatural cause. SWIFT (no friend to military men) thinks the *Carthaginian* general unworthy of any farther notice: and hastens to call up the senate of *Rome*. This gives him an opportunity of being very severe upon a certain modern assembly, which he treats in a manner more resembling the Cynic in his cell, than the free humoured *Rabelais* in his easy chair.

POMPEY and CÆSAR only appear to grace the entry of BRUTUS, who is SWIFT's favourite patriot: but as CÆSAR generously confessed to GULLIVER, "*That the greatest actions of his life, were not, by many degrees, equal to the glory of taking it away,*" it would have been a proper alleviation of the dictator's crimes, to have acknowledged him the greatest statesman, orator, and soldier of the age, in which he lived: an age, fertile of eminent men: an age, when ambition was scarce looked upon as a crime: and when the Roman virtue (once the support and preservation of the commonwealth) was long since lost in vice and luxury: at such a time a single master was become necessary, and POMPEY would have seized the reins of government, had not CÆSAR interposed. If the conspirators had restored liberty to their country, their act had been completely glorious, and would have shewed, that CÆSAR, not *Rome*, was degenerated. But if we may judge from the consequences, Heaven disapproved of the deed: a particular fate attended the conspirators, not one of whom died a natural death: and even BRUTUS, perhaps recollecting in his last moments the benefits, which he had re-

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ceived from CÆSAR, was staggered in his thoughts of virtue, and imagining himself deceived by a shadow, broke out into a pathetic expression, signifying, "that he had worshipped virtue as a substance, and had found it only a shadow:" so that he seems to have wanted that fortitude of mind, which constantly attends true virtue to the grave. This defect in the character of BRUTUS is not improperly expressed in the famous gallery of the great duke of Tuscany, where there is a very fine head of BRUTUS begun by MICHAEL ANGELO, but left unfinished: under it is engraven upon a copper plate, this distich,

*Dum BRUTI effigiem sculptor de marmore ducit,  
In mentem sceleris venit, et abstinuit.*

If BRUTUS erred, it was from a wrong notion of virtue. The character of CÆSAR is perhaps more amiable, but less perfect: his faults were great; however, many of them were foils to his virtues. A modern eminent writer has represented him as a glutton: he tells us, that when CÆSAR went to the public feasts, he constantly took a vomit in the morning, with a design to indulge himself with more keenness, and to increase his appetite for the ensuing feast. The fact is true; but I would willingly believe the inference unjust. It is more than probable, that he practised this custom by the advice of his physicians, who might direct such a regimen, as the most certain, and immediate preservation against epileptic fits, to which the Dictator was often liable.

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 105

liable. Your grandfather, my honoured father, (who was excelled by few physicians in the theory of physic) has often told me, that convulsions of this kind were of such a nature as generally to come on after eating, and more violently, if the stomach was overloaded, CÆSAR was so careful in observing a decent dignity in his behaviour, that he dreaded the shame of exposing publicly this weakness in his constitution; and therefore guarded against it in a prudent manner, which has since been construed into a reproach. This surmise, my HAM, rests upon the stronger foundation, as all authors agree, that he was most strictly, and remarkably abstemious.

In his public character CÆSAR appears a strong example, how far the greatest natural, and acquired accomplishments may lose their lustre, when made subservient to false glory, and an immoderate thirst of power; as on the other hand, the history of BRUTUS may instruct us, what unhappy effects the rigid exercise of superiour virtue, when misapplied and carried too far, may produce in the most steadfast mind, or the soundest judgement.

GULLIVER has given to BRUTUS five companions, JUN. BRUTUS, SOCRATES, EPAMINONDAS, CATO the censor, and Sir THOMAS MOORE. Such a sextumvirate is not easily to be increased: yet, let me hope, that the reflexion is too severely critical, when he adds,

*"that all the ages of the world cannot furnish out a seventh."*

Every age has produced men of virtue, and abilities in

the

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the highest degree. The race of mankind, since their first creation, have been always the same. The greatest characters have been blended with the greatest faults. Poets and historians have singled out particular persons for fame and immortality: they have adorned them with accomplishments, which perhaps they never possessed, while other men equally meritorious have been silently buried in oblivion, with only the self-consciousness of deserving a rank among the companions of BRUTUS in the Elyian fields.

In this illustrious sextumvirate, SOCRATES and SIR THOMAS MOORE undoubtedly deserve the pre-eminence. The extravagant virtue of JUNIUS BRUTUS is shocking to every parent, and every good-natured mind. The important services of the father might justly have claimed from the public the pardon of his sons: and if his paternal piety had saved their lives, his precepts and example might so effectually have reclaimed their errors, as to have made them become useful members of the commonwealth. I am fully persuaded, that if Dr. SWIFT had been a father, we should not have found the name of JUNIUS BRUTUS where it is now placed.

In EPAMINONDAS the Theban glory first appeared: and died. His own merit, in overcoming the greatest difficulties, entirely fixed his reputation. A happy concurrence of circumstances has often given fame to others; but EPAMINONDAS was indebted for his superior character only to himself.

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 107

I am in some doubt, whether CATO the *Censor* can fairly claim a rank among so choice a groope of ghosts. He justly indeed condemned the luxury of the Romans, and he punished their vices with an impartial severity: but herein he seems to have indulged his own natural temper rather than to have acted absolutely from a love of virtue: he was a declared enemy to poetry, painting, and all the politer arts: he was proud, vain, and morose: but above all, he was so extremely avaritious, that RHADAMANTHUS in the Archbishop of CAMBRAY's dialogues of the dead, after expressing some regard to his merits, tells him, as he was an usurer he could not be admitted into the Elysian fields: and therefore orders him to keep the gate as porter: in which situation, he might gratify the censoriousness of his disposition, by examining every ghost that attempted to come into *Elysium*, and by shutting the door against all those, who were not qualified for admittance. RHADAMANTHUS then gives him money to pay CHARON for such passengers, who were not able to pay for themselves, and at the same time declares, that he will punish him as a robber, if he offers to lend out that money upon usury. How very different, you will say, are the sentiments of Archbishop FENELON, and of DR. SWIFT in their judgement of CATO. The one, thinks him unworthy of a place among millions in *Elysium*, while the other distinguishes him among the greatest men of antiquity. From this dissension of opinions may be traced, perhaps, the particular temper both of the Archbishop and of the Dean,

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Dean, and from thence may be deduced the reason, why the *Cenſer* was eſteemed by the latter, and condemned by the former.

GULLIVER, after having taken a tranſient view of numberleſs illuſtrious perſons, whom he does not name, cloſes the chapter, and gives me an opportunity of finiſhing my letter. Late, very late, may you become a gholt! And when one, may you equal any of SWIFT's ſextumvirate, and may his gholt (grown leſs cynical and better inſtructed) rejoice to admit you into the company, from which he has ſo arbitrarily excluded all future generations. So wiſhes, ſo prays

*Your affectionate Father,*

O R R E R Y.



## L E T T E R XIV.

GULLIVER, tired of heroes, changes the ſcene in the eighth chapter of his voyage to *Laputa*, and becomes curious to know the ſituation of poets and philoſophers, who, in their turn, have as eagerly contended for fame, as CÆSAR for power, or BRUTUS for liberty. He deſires, that HOMER and ARISTOTLE may make their appearance at the head of their commentators.

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 105

tors. HOMER, says our traveller, "*was the taller, and comelier person of the two: walked very erect for one of his age, and his eyes were the most quick and piercing I ever beheld.*" It is certain, that HOMER has rather gained, than lost vigour by his years. Twenty six centuries have not unbraced his nerves, or given one wrinkle to his brow: and although GULLIVER has bestowed upon him the additional ornament of fine eyes, yet I am apt to think they made the figure of this divine old man less awful: at least I am glad that he wanted his eye sight while he lived, since it is impossible, not to conclude from the productions of HOMER and MILTON, that the *Mind's Eye* becomes more intensely discerning, when it is not interrupted by external objects. It is an old observation, that HOMER has nourished more persons than SYLLA, CÆSAR, and AUGUSTUS; and while their pictures have decayed, not a letter of the *Iliad* has been lost. The Grecian poet not only preserves his original form, but breathes freely, and looks beautiful in other languages: a happier metempsychosis than PYTHAGORAS ever dreamt of. However if HOMER was absolutely obliged to wear the different dresses, which have been given to him, he would sometimes, I believe, find the motion of his limbs uneasy and confined: and would prefer his own simple attire even to the birth day suit, which our English bard has given him. The commentators have done less honour to HOMER than the translators. Some of those learned pedants have entirely wasted their observations upon particles and words: others have run into a minute exactness,



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aetness, in comparing the propriety of his images : while others again, have endeavoured to trace out from the Iliad and Odyssey all the rudiments of arts and sciences. Some there are, who dwell on such narrow circumstances, as were neglected by HOMER, and can only be suitable to their own confined genius. They are not able to pursue him in his sublime flights, and attempt therefore, to bring him upon a level with themselves. Their low mechanical notions remind me of an absurd problem proposed by the famous Monsieur HUET, whether the Iliad might not be written upon vellum in so small a hand, that the whole might be contained within a nutshell ? This important question is said to have engaged the thoughts and attention of the French court, and gives us a true picture of a laborious, tasteless critic upon HOMER. The Dauphin, and his train, are for putting the Iliad into a nutshell, when ALEXANDER, and his courtiers, chose the richest, and most curious cabinet of DARIUS, as the only proper repository for HOMER's works.

HOMER and ARISTOTLE were as opposite as possible in their characters : but Dr. SWIFT has placed them together, chiefly with a view of shewing their commentators, in that just and ridiculous light, in which those scholiasts ought to appear. When an age is blessed with the productions of an uncommon genius, such as resembles HOMER, it must, in some measure, be punished by bad imitations and comments ; in the same manner that you may have observed the sun by its heat and influence raising vapours, and animating insects,  
that

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. III

that infect and perhaps corrupt the air, in which he shines with so much lustre. But, when an original admired author, as ARISTOTLE, is really erroneous, and deceives with false specious principles, what a train of errors must arise from commentators on such subjects, who, while they endeavour to pursue and extend a pleasing enchanted prospect, that has no real foundation, deviate into a dark, disagreeable road of briers and thorns?

It is on this account that the Dean has introduced ARISTOTLE in company with HOMER. The description of that philosopher is fine, and in a few words represents the true nature of his works. "*He stooped much, and made use of a staff. His visage was meagre, his hair lank and thin, and his voice hollow.*" By not having the immortal spirit of HOMER, he was unable to keep his body erect: and the staff which weakly supported him, like his commentators, made this defect more conspicuous. He wanted not some useful qualities, but these real ornaments, like his hair, were thin and ungraceful. His style was harsh, and, like his voice, had neither force nor harmony. He was without doubt a man of great genius and penetration, but he did infinitely more prejudice than service to real literature. He studied words more than facts, and delivered his philosophy perplexed with such intricate logical terms, as have laid a foundation for the endless scholastic disputations, which have corrupted and retarded the progress of learning. He waged war with all his predecessors. He never quotes an author, except with

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with a view to refute his opinion. Like the Ottoman Emperor, he could not reign in safety, till he had first destroyed his brethren. He was as ambitious in science, as his pupil ALEXANDER was in arms. He aimed to be a despotic original; and not only to be the Prince, but the Tyrant of philosophy. What then can be expected from the commentators on his works, who were devoid of his ingenuity, and possessed of all his intricate follies? RAMUS with his covert ignorance, and SCOTUS and AQUINAS with their subdivisions, and imaginary nothings, must make a contemptible figure in the Elysian fields, which are the supposed mansions of cheerfulness, truth, and candour, and consequently must be a very improper situation for that tribe of philosophers.

*" I then desired, says GULLIVER, that DESCARTES  
 " and GASSENDI might be called up: with whom I  
 " prevailed to explain their systems to ARISTOTLE: This  
 " great philosopher freely acknowledged his own mistakes  
 " in natural philosophy, because he proceeded in many things  
 " upon conjecture, as all men must do; and he found that  
 " GASSENDI, who had made the doctrine of EPICURUS  
 " as palatable as he could, and the vortices of DESCAR-  
 " TES were equally to be exploded. I believe you will  
 find, my dear HAMILTON, that ARISTOTLE is still to  
 be preferred to EPICURUS. The former made some  
 useful experiments and discoveries, and was engaged in  
 a real pursuit of knowledge, although his manner is  
 much perplexed. The latter was full of vanity and  
 ambition. He was an impostor, and only aimed at  
 de-*

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 113

deceiving. He seemed not to believe the principles which he has asserted. He committed the government of all things to chance. His natural philosophy is absurd. His moral philosophy wants its proper basis, the fear of God. Monsieur BAYLE, one of his warmest advocates, is of this last opinion, where he says, "*On ne sauroit pas dire assez de bien de l'honnêteté de ses mœurs, ni assez de mal de ses opinions sur la religion.*" His general maxim, that happiness consisted in pleasure was too much unguarded, and must lay a foundation of a most destructive practice: although from his temper and constitution, he made his actions sufficiently pleasurable to himself, and agreeable to the rules of true philosophy. His fortune exempted him from care and sollicitude. His valetudinarian habit of body from intemperance. He passed the greatest part of his time in his garden, where he enjoyed all the elegant amusements of life. There he studied. There he taught his philosophy. This particular happy situation greatly contributed to that tranquillity of mind, and indolence of body which he made his chief ends. He had not however resolution sufficient to meet the gradual approaches of death, and wanted that constancy which Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE ascribes to him: for in his last moments, when he found that his condition was desperate, he took such large draughts of wine, that he was absolutely intoxicated, and deprived of his senses; so that he died more like a bacchanal, than a philosopher: to which the epigram alludes,

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*Hinc Stygias ebrius hausit aquas.*

I should not have ventured into this criticism and censure upon these antient philosophers, not even to you, my dearest HAM, if my opinion was not in a great measure supported by Lord BACON, who, as he was certainly the most accurate judge of this subject, might be perhaps, from that pre-eminence, too severe a critic. It must be owned, that EPICURUS in particular has many followers and admirers among the antients, and among the moderns. CICERO commends him for cultivating his friendships in the most exquisite manner. The book lyes open before me, and I will transcribe the words, *De quâ [amicitiâ] EPICURUS quidem ita dicit omnium rerum quas ad beatè vivendum sapientia comparaverit, nihil esse majus amicitiâ, nihil uberius, nihil jucundius, neque verò hoc oratione solum, sed multo magis vita & factis, et moribus comprobavit.* DIOGENES LAERTIUS praises his virtue and learning. In the Augustan age the greatest names are inserted among his followers. CÆSAR, ATTICUS, MÆCENAS, LUCRETIUS, VIRGIL, and HORACE embraced his philosophy, and gave a lustre to his sect, and doctrines. Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE says, "*that he wonders, why such sharp invectives were so generally made against EPICURUS, by the ages that followed him: especially as his admirable wit, felicity of expression, excellence of nature, sweetness of conversation, temperance of life, and constancy of death, made him so much beloved by*"  
" his

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 115

" his friends, admired by his scholars, and honoured by  
 " the Athenians." Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE imputes this  
 injustice " to the envy, and malignity of the Stoics, and  
 " to some gross pretenders, who assumed the denomination  
 " of that sect : who mistook his favourite principle"  
 (THAT ALL HAPPINESS CONSISTED IN PLEASURE) " by  
 " confining it to sensual pleasure only. To these succeeded  
 " the Christians, who esteemed his principles of natural  
 " philosophy more opposite to those of our religion than either  
 " the Platonists, the Peripatetics, or even the Stoics them-  
 " selves." This is the opinion, and these are almost  
 the exact words of the great Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE.

SWIFT equally explodes EPICURUS, and the more  
 modern philosophers DESCARTES and GASSENDI.

DESCARTES was a knight errant in philosophy, per-  
 petually mistaking windmills for giants ; yet by the  
 strength of a warm imagination he started some opini-  
 ons, which probably put Sir ISAAC NEWTON, and  
 others, on making many experiments that produced  
 most useful discoveries.

GASSENDI was esteemed one of the greatest orna-  
 ments of FRANCE. He was a doctor of divinity, and  
 royal professor of mathematics. He was born in Pro-  
 vence in 1592, and died in 1655. With great industry  
 he collected whatever related to the person, and to the  
 philosophy of EPICURUS, the latter of which he has  
 reduced into a complete system.

I have now, my HAMILTON, cursorily gone tho-  
 rough the characters of such ghosts, as are nominally

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specified by GULLIVER. I may be wrong either in my account, or in my observations : and I shall rejoice to be confuted by you in any point of learning whatever.

The description of the STRULDBRUGGS, in the tenth chapter, is an instructive piece of morality : for, if we consider it in a serious light, it tends to reconcile us to our final dissolution. Death, when set in contrast to the immortality of the STRULDBRUGGS, is no longer the King of Terrors : he loses his sting : he appears to us as a friend : and we cheerfully obey his summons, because it brings certain relief to the greatest miseries. It is in this description, that SWIFT shines in a particular manner. He probably felt in himself the effects of approaching age, and tacitly dreaded that period of life, in which he might become a representative of those *miserable immortals*. His apprehensions were unfortunately fulfilled. He lived to be the most melancholy sight that was ever beheld : yet, even in that condition, he continued to instruct, by appearing a providential instance to mortify the vanity, which is too apt to arise in the human breast. Our life cannot be pronounced happy, till the last scene is closed with ease and resignation ; the mind still continuing to preserve its usual dignity, and falling into the arms of death, as a wearied traveller sinks into rest. This is that *Euthanasia* which AUGUSTUS often desired, which ANTONINUS PIUS enjoyed, and for which every wise man will pray.

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pray. GOD Almighty's providence protect and guide you, my HAM, whatever fate of life, or fortune attends

*Your affectionate Father,*

O R R E R Y.



## LETTER XV.

IT is with great reluctance, I shall make some remarks on GULLIVER's voyage to the *Houyhbnms*. In this last part of his imaginary travels, SWIFT has indulged a misanthropy that is intolerable. The representation which he has given us of human nature, must terrify, and even debase the mind of the reader who views it. His sallies of wit and humour lose all their force, nothing remaining but a melancholy, and disagreeable impression: and, as I have said to you, on other parts of his works, we are disgusted, not entertained; we are shocked, not instructed by the fable. I should therefore chuse to take no notice of his YAHOOs, did I not think it necessary to assert the dignity of human nature, and thereby, in some measure, to pay my duty to the great author of our species, who has created us in a very fearful, and a very wonderful manner.



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We are composed of a mind, and of a body, intimately united, and mutually affecting each other, Their operations indeed are entirely different. Whether the immortal spirit, that enlivens this fine machine, is originally of a superior nature in various bodies (which, I own, seems most consistent and agreeable to the scale and order of beings) or, whether the difference depends on a symmetry, or peculiar structure of the organs combined with it, is beyond my reach to determine. It is evidently certain, that the body is curiously formed with proper organs to delight, and such as are adapted to all the necessary uses of life. The spirit animates the whole ; it guides the natural appetites, and confines them within just limits. But, the natural force of this spirit is often immersed in matter ; and the mind becomes subservient to passions, which it ought to govern and direct. Your friend HORACE, although of the Epicurean doctrine, acknowledges this truth, where he says,

*Atque affigit humo divinæ particulam auræ.*

It is no less evident, that this immortal spirit has an independent power of acting, and, when cultivated in a proper manner, seemingly quits the corporeal frame within which it is imprisoned, and soars into higher, and more spacious regions ; where, with an energy, which, I had almost said was divine, it ranges among those heavenly bodies, that, in this lower world, are scarce visible to our eyes ; and we can at once explain the distance, magnitude, and velocity of the planets,

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 119

and can foretel, even to a degree of minuteness, the particular time when a comet will return, and when the sun will be eclipsed in the next century. These powers certainly evince the dignity of human nature, and the surprising effects of the immaterial spirit within us, which, in so confined a state, can thus disengage itself from the fetters of matter. It is from this pre-eminence of the soul over the body, that we are enabled to view the exact order, and curious variety of different beings; to consider, and cultivate the natural productions of the earth; and to admire, and imitate the wise benevolence which reigns throughout the whole system of the universe. It is from hence, that we form moral laws for our conduct. From hence, we delight in copying that great original, who, in his essence, is utterly incomprehensible, but, in his influence, is powerfully apparent to every degree of his creation. From hence too, we perceive a real beauty in virtue, and a distinction between good and evil. Virtue acts with the utmost generosity, and with no view to her own advantage: while vice, like a glutton, feeds herself enormously, and then is willing to disgorge the nauseous offals of her feast. But I shall wander too far, especially as I flatter myself, that your mind is so good, and so unprejudiced, that you will more easily feel, than I can illustrate, the truth of these assertions.

SWIFT deduces his observations from wrong principles; for, in his land of *Houyhnhnms*, he considers the soul and body in their most degenerate, and un-

## 120 REMARKS ON THE LIFE

cultivated state: the former as a slave to the appetites of the latter. He seems insensible of the surprising mechanism, and beauty of every part of the human composition. He forgets the fine description which OVID gives of mankind.

*Os homini sublime dedit, cælumque tueri  
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.*

In painting YAHOOs he becomes one himself. Nor is the picture which he draws of the *Houyhnhnms*, inviting or amusing. It wants both light and shade to adorn it. It is cold and insipid. We there view the pure instincts of brutes, unassisted by any knowledge of letters, acting within their own narrow sphere, merely for their immediate preservation. They are incapable of doing wrong, therefore they act right. It is surely a very low character given to creatures, in whom the author would insinuate some degree of reason, that they act inoffensively, when they have neither the motive nor the power to act otherwise. Their virtuous qualities are only negative. SWIFT himself, amidst all his irony, must have confessed, that to moderate our passions, to extend our munificence to others, to enlarge our understanding, and to raise our idea of the Almighty by contemplating his works, is not only the business, but often the practice, and the study of the human mind. It is too certain, that no one individual has ever possessed every qualification and excellence: however such an assemblage of different virtues, may still be collected from different persons,

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sons, as are sufficient to place the dignity of human nature in an amiable, and exalted station. We must lament indeed the many instances of those who degenerate, or go astray from the end and intention of their being. The true source of this depravity is often owing to the want of education, to the false indulgence of parents, or to some other bad causes, which are constantly prevalent in every nation. Many of these errors are finely ridiculed in the foregoing parts of this romance: but the voyage to the *Houyhnhnms* is a real insult upon mankind.

I am heartily tired of this last part of GULLIVER'S travels, and am glad, that, having exhausted all my observations on this disagreeable subject, I may finish my letter; especially as the conclusion of it naturally turns my thoughts from Yahoos, to one of the dearest pledges I have upon earth, yourself: to whom I am a most

*Affectionate Father,*

O R R E R Y.

L E T.



## L E T T E R XVI.

WHAT is to be done, my HAMILTON, with the fourth volume of SWIFT's works? How can I amuse you with any remarks from a collection of tracts, not only upon exceeding grave subjects, but entirely relative to the kingdom of *Ireland*? not only local, but temporary? In the beginning of the volume is a pamphlet entitled *A Letter from a Member of the House of Commons in Ireland, to a Member of the House of Commons in England, concerning the Sacramental Test, written in the year 1708*: and it is preceded by an explanatory advertisement, that was either dictated, or strictly revised by the Dean himself. He held the dissenters in the utmost degree of ridicule and detestation. He had an openness in his disposition, and a frankness in his conduct, that bore an abhorrence to all kind of reserve: even to discretion. Solemnities and outward forms were despised by him. His humorous disposition tempted him to actions inconsistent with the dignity of a clergyman: and such flights drew upon him the general character of an irreligious man. I remember to have heard a story of him that fully shews how little he regarded certain ceremonies, which ought always to be observed with respect. Soon after he had been made

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 123

made Dean of St. PATRICK's, he was loitering one Sunday in the afternoon at the house of Dr. RAYMOND (with whom he had dined) at *Trim*, a little town near *Dublin*, of which the Doctor was vicar. The bell had rung : the parishioners were assembled, for evening prayers : and Dr. RAYMOND was preparing to go to the church, which was scarce two hundred yards from his house. " RAYMOND, said the Dean, " I'll lay you a crown I will begin prayers before you " this afternoon." " I accept the wager," replied Dr. RAYMOND ; and immediately they both ran as fast as they could towards the church. RAYMOND, who was much the nimbler man of the two, arrived first at the door : and when he entered the church, walked decently towards the reading desk, SWIFT never slackened his pace, but, running up the aisle, left Dr. RAYMOND behind him in the middle of it, and stepping into the reading desk, without putting on a surplice, or opening the prayer-book, began the liturgy in an audible voice, and continued to repeat the service sufficiently long to win his wager. To such a disposition it is impossible that the gravity of nonconformists could be agreeable. The dislike was mutual on both sides. Dr. SWIFT hated all fanatics : all fanatics hated Dr. SWIFT. The pamphlet, which now lies before me, is particularly written against *repealing the test act* : and whoever considers himself related to the kingdom of *Ireland*, will find in it some arguments of weight and consideration, in case any such repeal should ever be attempted there.

I cannot help pointing out to you, one particular piece of satire, that is entirely in SWIFT's own style and manner. In the fourth page, he expresses himself thus. "*One of these authors (the fellow that was pilloried, I have forgot his name) is indeed so grave, so sententious, dogmatical a rogue, that there is no enduring him.*" The fellow that was pilloried was DANIEL DEFOE, whose name SWIFT well knew and remembered, but the circumstance of the pillory was to be introduced; and the manner of introducing it shews great art in the nicest touches of satire, and carries all the marks of ridicule, indignation, and contempt. The scoffs and sarcasms of SWIFT, like the bite of the rattlesnake, distinguish themselves more venomously dangerous, than the wounds of a common serpent.

The next tract is, *A Proposal for the universal use of Irish Manufacture in clothes, and furniture of houses, &c.* utterly rejecting and renouncing every thing wearable that comes from *England*. Written in the year 1720. In a former letter<sup>a</sup>, I believe I have told you, that, upon looking over the dates of Dr. SWIFT's works, he does not appear as a political writer from the year 1714 to the year 1720. You will probably be curious to know, in what manner he employed his time from the death of the Queen till the South-sea year. Not in poetry, for his poetical pieces, during that period, are in a manner domestic; being scarce any more than trifles to SHERIDAN, or *poematia* to STELLA. How then is

<sup>a</sup> Letter VI.

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 125

the chafm to be filled up? I imagine, by GULLIVER'S travels. Such a work must, in all likelihood, have engrossed his leisure, during five or six years. When that was finished, he found an opening to indulge his love of politics, and to commence a patriot for *Ireland*: and he made use of the opportunity, by encreasing the natural jealousy which the lesser island constantly entertains of the greater. His *treatise*, or *proposal*, immediately raised a very violent flame. The printer was prosecuted: and the prosecution had the same effect, which generally attends such measures: it added fuel to the flame. But his greatest enemies must confess, that the pamphlet is written in the stile of a man, who had the good of his country nearest his heart, who saw her errors, and wished to correct them; who felt her oppressions, and wished to relieve them; and who had a desire to rouse, and awaken an indolent nation from a lethargic disposition, that might prove fatal to her constitution.

To the proposal, in favour of the Irish manufactures, succeed, *Some Arguments against enlarging the Power of Bishops in letting of Leases*. This is too serious a pamphlet for your perusal, nor shall I detain you with any farther account of it, than to say, that it is intermixt with those masterly strokes of irony, which so often appear in SWIFT'S works.

But the general subject of the pamphlet leads me to recollect a circumstance much to the Dean's honour. He could never be induced to take fines for any of the chapter lands. He always chose to raise the rents, as the method least oppressive to the present tenant, and  
most



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most advantageous to all future tenants and landlords. He constantly refused to give charity out of the chapter funds, which he alledged were scarce sufficient to maintain the necessary repairs of the cathedral. I have already told you <sup>a</sup>, that, among his prebendaries, the *vox Decani* was the *vox Dei*.

We are now come to THE DRAPER's *Letters*, those brazen monuments of his fame. They were written in the year 1724. I have said so much in one of my former letters <sup>b</sup> of the cause which gave rise to them, and of the effect which they had upon the nation, that I need say no more in this place, than to recommend them to your perusal, for the file and conduct of their manner: but, lest they may appear too grave to so young a man, and one who is so little interested in the present, and much less in the past affairs of *Ireland*, you will find a paper at the end of them that will excite your risibility, or I am mistaken. It is entitled, *A full and true account of the solemn procession to the Gallows at the execution of WILLIAM WOOD, Esq; and bard-ware-man*<sup>c</sup>. The author makes the several artificers attend WILLIAM WOOD (represented by a log of timber) to the gallows, and each tradesman expresses his resentment in the terms of his proper calling. "*The Cook will*" "BASTE him. *The BOOKSELLER will* TURN OVER A "NEW LEAF *with him. The TAYLOR will* fit IN HIS "SKIRTS;" and so on, through a number of people

<sup>a</sup> See Letter V.

<sup>b</sup> Letter VI.

<sup>c</sup> Page 233.

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 127

of different conditions. Then follows the procession, most humorously described. The whole is a piece of ridicule too powerful for the strongest gravity to withstand.

The next tract is, *A short view of the state of Ireland, written in the year 1727*<sup>a</sup>. Of this I need take little notice, since the present state of *Ireland* is, in general, as flourishing as possible. Agriculture is cultivated: arts and sciences are encouraged: and in the space of eighteen years, which is almost the full time that I have known it, no kingdom can be more improved. *Ireland*, in relation of *England*, may be compared to a younger sister lately come of age, after having suffered all the miseries of an injured minor; such as law suits, encroachments upon her property, violation of her rights, destruction of her tenants, and every evil that can be named. At length, time, and her own noble spirit of industry, have entirely relieved her; and, some little heart-burnings excepted, she enjoys the quiet possession of a very ample fortune, subject, by way of acknowledgement, to certain quit rents payable to the elder branch of her house: and let me add by experience, that *take her all in all*, she cannot have a greater fortune than she deserves.

I shall not make any comments upon *An Answer to a Paper called A Memorial of the poor Inhabitants, Tradesmen, and Labourers of the Kingdom of Ireland, written in the year 1728*<sup>b</sup>. The pamphlet which comes next in

<sup>a</sup> Page 240.

<sup>b</sup> Page 251.

order of succession, is written with SWIFT's usual peculiarity of humour. The title of it is, *A Modest Proposal for preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland, from being a burden to their Parents or Country; and for making them beneficial to the Public, written in the year 1729*<sup>a</sup>. The proposal is to fatten beggars children, and sell them for food to rich landlords, and persons of quality.

*The vindication of his Excellency JOHN Lord CARTERET from the charge of favouring none but Tories, High-Churchmen, and Jacobites*<sup>b</sup>, is entirely humorous, and so I think are all the remaining pamphlets in this volume. But the last piece, entitled, *The Speech and dying Words of EBENEZOR ELLISTON, who was executed the second of May 1722, written and published at his desire for the common good*, had a most excellent effect<sup>c</sup>. The thieves, vagabonds, and all the lower class of people thought it the real work of EBENEZOR ELLISTON, who had received the grounds of a good education; and the stile of this paper is so natural for a person in such circumstances, that it would almost deceive the nicest judgement.

I have now completed my animadversions upon the four first volumes of SWIFT's works; the last of which contains abundance of ironical wit founded upon the basis of reason and good sense. But, I had almost forgot, that, at the latter end of the volume, there are

<sup>a</sup> Page 262.

<sup>b</sup> Page 275. Written in the year 1730.

<sup>c</sup> Page 363.

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 129

three copies of verses, two of which are addressed to the Dean, and the third is his answer: the first being my property may serve to conclude this letter. It was occasioned by an annual custom, which I found pursued among his friends, of making him a present on his birth-day. As he had admitted me of that number, I sent him a paper-book, finely bound, in the first leaf of which I wrote the following lines.

*Dublin, November 30, 1732.*

**T**O thee, dear SWIFT, these spotless leaves I send;  
 Small is the present, but sincere the friend,  
 Think not so poor a book below thy care,  
 Who knows the price that thou canst make it bear?  
 Tho' tawdry now, and like TYRILLA's face,  
 The specious front shines out with borrow'd grace:  
 Tho' paste-boards glittering like a tinsel'd coat,  
 A *rasa tabula* within denote;  
 Yet if a venal and corrupted age,  
 And modern vices should provoke thy rage;  
 If warn'd once more by their impending fate  
 A sinking country and an injur'd state,  
 Thy great assistance should again demand,  
 And call forth reason to defend the land;  
 Then shall we view these sheets, with glad surprize,  
 Inspir'd with thought, and speaking to our eyes:  
 Each vacant space shall then, enrich'd, dispense  
 True force of eloquence, and nervous sense;  
 Inform the judgement, animate the heart,  
 And sacred rules of policy impart,

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The

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The spangled covering, bright with splendid ore,  
Shall cheat the sight with empty shew no more;  
But lead us inward to those golden mines,  
Where all thy soul in native lustre shines.  
So when the eye surveys some lovely fair,  
With bloom of beauty, grac'd with shape and air,  
How is the rapture heighten'd, when we find  
Her form excell'd by her celestial mind !

ORRERY.

L E T



## LETTER XVII.

I Have already told you, my dear HAM, that the four first volumes of SWIFT's works were published together, and passed immediately under his own inspection. Not long afterwards came out two additional volumes, both which were supervised and corrected by the author.

*The Conduct of the Allies* begins the fifth volume. I imagine that *the Publisher's Preface* was composed by the Dean himself, but affectedly written in a bad style. The last paragraph makes me suspect his hand. "*It is plainly seen, says the Publisher, that a spirit of liberty is diffused through all these writings, and that the author is an enemy to tyranny and oppression in any shape whatever.*" This is the character at which SWIFT aimed, and this is the character which indeed he deserved.

Throughout the course of these letters I have freely pointed out to you all his faults, but I beg you to remember, that with all those faults, he was above corruption. A virtue in itself sufficient to cover a multitude of human failings, since from that virtue alone can flow prosperity to the commonwealth.

*The conduct of the Allies* was written in the year 1712, and it is preparatory to the peace, which the ministers

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were then concerting, and which was afterwards perfected at *Utrecht*. It begins by reflexions on war in general, and then particularly mentions the several civil wars in our kingdom. When I am reading treatises of this sort, I cannot help pitying my unhappy country, torn to pieces by her own sons. A wretched mother of vultures, for whom, like *TITRUS*, she produces new entrails only to be devoured.

The papers called *the Examiners*, at least those of which Dr. SWIFT is the author, fill up the rest of the volume. They begin in *November* 1710, and they are carried down to the end of *July* 1711. They are written in defence of the new administration, and the particular revolutions at court which had introduced the Earl of OXFORD, and had displaced the earl of GODOLPHIN and his friends.

Many of SWIFT's *Examiners* are personally aimed at the General\*. In a free country, the power of a general is always to be feared. The greater his military capacity, or the more successful his arms, in the greater danger are the liberties of the people. On this maxim SWIFT proceeded; and while he was writing in defence of the commonwealth, he had an opportunity of giving a loose to his own severity, of which *the house of Pride*, and several other allegorical essays are very spirited examples.

But I am fettered in my animadversions on these papers. The present times, and the honour which I bear

\* The Duke of MARLBOROUGH.

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 133

to many noble families descended from persons mentioned in *the Examiners*, make me willing to take as slight notice as possible even of the wittiest passages in those papers; because many of those passages arise from personal reflections, or party sarcasms. In general, the several points relating to the national debt (alas! how increased since the year seventeen hundred and ten) the too long continuance of the war, and other public topics of complaint are melancholy truths, justly becoming the pen of a man who loves his country.

Within these last forty years, the political treatises have been so numerous, so various, so local, and so temporary, that each new pamphlet has succeeded its predecessor, like a youthful son to an antient father amidst a multiplicity of followers, admirers, and dependants, whilst the antiquated Sire having *strutted and foamed his hour upon the stage, is heard no more*, but lies silent, and almost entirely forgotten, except by a few friends and contemporaries, who accidentally remember some of his just observations, or prophetic aphorisms, which they have lived to see accomplished. Thus has it fared, even in my time, with the *EXAMINERS*, the *FREEHOLDERS*, and the *CRAFTSMAN*: and the same fate will attend most writings of that sort, which being framed to serve particular views, fulfill the purport of their creation, and then perish: while works of a more liberal and diffusive kind are acceptable to all persons, and all times; and may assume to themselves a certain prospect of surviving to the latest posterity.



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But my dearest HAMILTON, when you enter into the commerce of life, you will be obliged, in your own defence, to look into every thing that has been written upon political subjects. In *England*, a man cannot keep up a conversation without being well versed in politics. In whatever other point of learning he may be deficient, he certainly must not appear superficial in state affairs. He must chuse his party; and he must stick to the choice. *Non revocare gradum* must be his motto; and Heaven forgive you, my dear son, if the *gradus* now and then enforces you to act against self conviction.

If party, and the consequences of it had arisen to that height among the Romans and Grecians, as it has arisen of late years among the English, their poets would probably have added *her* to the three furies, and would have placed her in hell, as a fit companion for TISIPHONE, MEGÆRA, and ALECTO, from whence, according to their description, she might have made excursions upon earth, only with an intention to destroy, confound, mislead, and disunite mankind.

It is true, that all countries have their parties and their factions. But there is a certain contagious disposition of this sort, so peculiar to the British islands, that, I believe, it is unknown to every other part of the world. It encreases our natural gloom, and it makes us so averse to each other, that it keeps men of the best morals, and most social inclinations, in one continued state of warfare and opposition. Must not the source of this malady arise rather from the heart, than from  
 2 the

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the head ? from the different operations of our passions, rather than of our reason ?

*Furoræ cæcus, an rapit vis acrior,  
An culpa ?*

SWIFT, a man of violent passions, was, in consequence of those passions, violent in his party : but as his capacity and genius were so extraordinary and extensive, even his party writings carry with them dignity and instruction : and in that light I wish you to read *the Examiners*, where you will find a nervous style, a clear diction, and great knowledge of the true landed interest of England.

*I am,*

*My dear HAMILTON,*

*Your ever affectionate Father,*

O R R E R Y.

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L E T.



## LETTER XVIII.

SUCH a confusion, such a mixture of verse, prose, politics, letters, similes, wit, trifles, and *polite conversation*, are thrown into the sixth volume, that I know not in what manner to treat it, or what particular part to recommend to your perusal. The poetry, the similes, and the trifles are not worth your attention. Of the letters, the two from the earl of PETERBOROUGH to Mr. POPE are short, but excellent in their kind. The others, I mean those of the Dean, and of Mr. POPE, have much less merit, or at least are much less agreeable. Lord PETERBOROUGH's wit is easy and unaffected. At the time when he wrote those two letters, he had hung up his helmet, and his buckler, and was retired to his plough, and his wheelbarrow, wearied of courts, and disgusted with statesmen. He had made a most considerable figure in his day. His character was amiable and uncommon. His life was a continued series of variety. In his public and private conduct he differed from most men. He had visited all climates, but had staid in none. He was a citizen of the world. He conquered and maintained armies without money. His actions and expressions were peculiar to himself. He was of a vivacity  
superiour

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superiour to all fatigue, and his courage was beyond any conception of danger. He verified, in many instances, whatever has been said of romantic heroes. He seems to have been fixed only in his friendships and moral principles. He had a true regard and affection for SWIFT and POPE. The Dean, in a short copy of verses \*, has described him in a very particular manner, but so justly, that the four last stanzas will give a most perfect, and compleat idea of Lord PETERBOROUGH's person and military virtues,

“ A *skleton* in outward figure,  
“ His meagre corps, though full of vigour,  
“ Would halt behind him were it bigger.

“ So wonderful his expedition,  
“ When you have not the least suspicion,  
“ He's with you like an apparition.

“ Shines in all climates like a star,  
“ In senates bold, and fierce in war,  
“ A land commander, and a tar.

“ Heroic actions early bred in,  
“ Ne'er to be match'd in modern reading,  
“ But by his name-fake CHARLES of Sweden.

\* Vol. II. Page 222.

The

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The *Publick Spirit of the Whigs* is a pamphlet in answer to the *Crisis* written by Sir RICHARD STEELE, but it contains such acute satire against the nobility of Scotland, that in an advertisement printed before it, we are told, "All the Scotch lords then in London went in a body to complain against the author; and the consequence of that complaint was a proclamation offering a reward of three hundred pounds to discover him." It was written in the year 1712, by the consent, if not the encouragement of the ministers of that æra. In the style and conduct, it is one of the boldest, as well as one of the most masterly tracts that SWIFT ever wrote. And I cannot help again observing, that on whatever topic he employs his pen, the subject which he treats of, is always so excellently managed, as to seem to have been the whole study, and application of his life: so that he appears, the greatest master through a greater variety of materials, than perhaps have been discussed by any other author.

The *Bishop of Salisbury* [Dr. BURNET] is the next antagonist whom SWIFT attacks in single combat. I can give you no better idea of this work, than by a quotation from the tract itself, which is called, *A Preface to the Bishop of Salisbury's introduction to the third volume of the History of the Reformation of the Church of England*. Towards the latter end of the Pamphlet \* SWIFT says,

"However be [THE BISHOP] thanks God, there are many among us who stand in the breach: I believe there

\* Page 89.

" may:

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" may : it is a BREACH of their own making, and they  
 " design to come forward, and storm and plunder, if  
 " they are not driven back. THEY MAKE THEM-  
 " SELVES A WALL FOR THEIR CHURCH AND  
 " COUNTRY. A south wall, I suppose, for all the  
 " best fruit of the church and country to be nailed on.  
 " Let us examine this metaphor. THE WALL OF OUR  
 " CHURCH AND COUNTRY is built of those who love  
 " the constitution in both. Our domestic enemies under-  
 " mine some parts of the WALL, and place themselves in  
 " the BREACH; and then they cry, WE ARE THE WALL.  
 " We do not like such patch-work; they build with un-  
 " tempered mortar; nor can they ever cement with us,  
 " till they get better materials; and better workmen :  
 " GOD keep us from having our BREACHES made up  
 " with such rubbish : THEY STAND UPON THE  
 " WATCHTOWER ! They are indeed pragmatical enough  
 " to do so ; but who assigned them that post, to give us  
 " false intelligence, to alarm us with false dangers, and  
 " send us to defend one gate, while their accomplices are  
 " breaking in at another ? THEY CRY TO GOD DAY  
 " AND NIGHT TO AVERT THE JUDGEMENT OF  
 " POPERY, WHICH SEEMS TO HASTEN TOWARDS  
 " US. Then I affirm, they are hypocrites by day, and  
 " filthy dreamers by night. When they cry unto Him,  
 " He will not hear them : for they cry out against the  
 " plainest dictates of their own conscience, reason and be-  
 " lief.

" But

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" *But lastly, THEY LIE IN THE DUST; MOURN-  
ING BEFORE HIM. Hang me if I believe that, unless  
it be figuratively spoken. But, suppose it to be true, why  
do THEY LIE IN THE DUST? because they love to  
raise it; for what do they mourn? why for power,  
wealth, and places. There let the enemies of the Queen,  
Monarchy, and the Church lie, and mourn, and lick the  
DUST like SERPENTS, till they are truly sensible of  
their ingratitude, falsehood, disobedience, slander, blas-  
phemy, sedition, and every evil work.*"

I must follow the same method in forming your idea of the next pamphlet, by a quotation out of it, which happens to be the first paragraph. The title is, *The Presbyterian Plea of Merit in order to take off the Test, impartially examined*: and the author begins in the true vein of wit and spirit, by saying, "*We have been told in the common newspapers, that all attempts are to be made this session by the presbyterians and their abettors, for taking off the test; as a kind of preparatory step to make it go down smoother in England. For, if once THEIR LIGHT WOULD SO SHINE, the papists, delighted with the blaze, would all come in, and dance about it. This I take to be a prudent method, like that of a discreet physician, who first gives a new medicine to a dog, before he prescribes it to a HUMAN CREATURE.*" I have quoted this short passage for the style, as well as the matter; and I dare say, even from hence, you will be confirmed in one general observation, that SWIFT maintains and conducts his metaphors and allusions, with a justness particularly delicate and exact, and without the least

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stiffness, or affectation. In some of my former letters, I have mentioned in what degree of contempt and hatred he held the dissenters, especially the presbyterians: and I need only add, that as this pamphlet was written for the meridian of *Ireland*, it ought to have been placed with the other tracts on the same subject.

The subsequent pamphlet is, *Advice offered to the Members of the October Club*. It was written in the year 1711, and is so applicable to that particular time, that I shall not make any animadversions upon it. From political tracts, the true history of *England* is to be deduced: and if foreigners were to enter into that branch of reading, they might frame a more distinct notion of our legislature, and of our manners, than from more laboured, and connected accounts of our constitution. In such a view, I am apt to think, that, at first sight, they must behold us a disunited, discontented, and seemingly an unsteady people: but I am certain, that, upon a more minute disquisition, they must find in us a fixed, and, I may say, an innate love of liberty, variegated, and perhaps sometimes erroneous in its progress, but constant, and unwearied in the pursuit of that glorious end. What people upon earth can desire a more exalted, or a more distinguished character? To speak in the dialect of the heathen world, our errors are the errors of men, our principles are the principles of gods.

The



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The other pieces in this volume, except *The Remarks on the Barrier Treaty*, are not, in my mind, sufficiently striking to deserve much notice. Some of them are the *minutissima* of SWIFT's writings, which, I believe, he would scarce have published, fond as he was of seeing his works in print, if he had been in the full vigour of his understanding, or had considered, that those kind of trifles, which are weak as feathers, in supporting a reputation, are heavy as lead, in depressing it.

*I am, my dearest HAM,*

*Your most affectionate Father,*

O R R E R Y.

L E T-



## LETTER XIX.

THE seventh volume contains SWIFT's epistolary correspondence, from the year 1714 to the year 1737, and, as it is an acknowledged observation, that no part of an author's writings give a greater insight into his natural disposition than his letters, (especially when written with freedom and sincerity) I shall endeavour to point out to you, such circumstances in SWIFT's epistles, and in the answers of his friends, as may afford you materials to form your own conjectures upon the different characters not only of *the Dean*, but of his correspondents. From preceding letters, you are probably become acquainted with Dr. SWIFT, but the manners and opinions of those persons with whom he corresponded, are in every respect so blended with his own, as not to be easily separated, and in such a kind of united view, they will mutually reflect light upon each other.

To a young man just entering into the world as you are, the subject may prove of particular importance, as it may guide him not only in the choice of his correspondents, but in his manner of writing to them.

The freedom of the press is to be watched and defended with the most jealous eye. It is one of the chief articles of that great *Charter* of liberty to which  
the

the people of *England* are entitled : but as no human institution can be perfect, even this branch of liberty has its excrescences that might be pruned. I mean particularly that licence which of late has too much prevailed of publishing epistolary correspondences. Such a fashion, for I know not what else to call it, is extremely pernicious. At present, it satisfies the curiosity of the public ; but for the future, it will tend to restrain that unreserved openness, which is the principal delight of writing to our friends. I am sorry to say by experience, that the letters which contain the most sincere, and perhaps hasty observations upon persons, times, and circumstances, are often reserved as treasures, and hoarded up, as misers hoard gold ; like which, they lie concealed in cabinets and strong boxes for some time, till chancing to fall into the hands of an extravagant heir, or an injudicious executor, they are not only brought into light, but dispersed and exposed, so as to become the property of the whole world. Let me advise you therefore, my HAMILTON, when you give your opinion upon any important subject, to consider it well, before you commit your thoughts to paper. Express yourself with diffidence. Preserve a prudent restraint over the sallies of wit and humour : and be cautious in all declarations of friendship ; as the very common offers of civility, are too often explained into undesigned engagements.

\* I own, HAM, I find myself under no small difficulty in discussing this volume of SWIFT's letters. General  
criti-

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criticisms will be attended with obscurity: and it would be tedious to consider them in their exact order. I shall endeavour therefore, to take a review only of what seems to deserve your attention. Let us begin with the letters that passed between Dr. SWIFT and Mr. POPE. The correspondence had commenced in a very early part of Mr. POPE's life, and was carried on with scarce any interruption from the death of the Queen. If we may judge of Mr. POPE from his works, his chief aim was to be esteemed a man of virtue. His letters are written in that style. His last volumes are all of the moral kind. He has avoided trifles, and consequently has escaped a rock which has proved very injurious to SWIFT's reputation. He has given his imagination full scope, and yet has preserved a perpetual guard upon his conduct. The constitution of his body and mind might early incline him to habits of caution and reserve. The treatment which he met afterwards from an innumerable tribe of adversaries, confirmed those habits, and made him slower than the *Dean* in pronouncing his judgement upon persons and things. His prose writings are little less harmonious than his verse: and his voice in common conversation was so naturally musical, that I remember honest TOM SOUTHERNE used always to call him *The little nightingale*. His manners were delicate, easy, and engaging: and he treated his friends with a politeness that charmed, and a generosity that was much to his honour. Every guest was made happy within his doors. Pleasure dwelt under his roof, and

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Elegance

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Elegance presided at his table. Dr. SWIFT was of a different disposition: To his domestics he was passionate and churlish: to his equals and superiors rather an entertaining than a desirable companion. He told a story in an admirable manner: his sentences were short, and perspicuous; his observations were piercing. He had seen the great world, and had profited much by his experience. He had not the least tincture of vanity in his conversation. He was perhaps, as he said himself, too proud to be vain. When he was polite, it was in a manner entirely his own. In his friendships he was constant and undisguised. He was the same in his enmities. He generally spoke as he thought in all companies and at all times. I remember to have heard, that he dined once at a Lord Mayor's feast in *Dublin*, and was attacked, and teized by an opulent, boisterous, half-intoxicated *Squire*, who happened to sit next him: he bore the awkward railery for some time, and then on a sudden called out in a loud voice to the Mayor, "*My Lord, here is one of your bears at my shoulder, he has been worrying me this half hour, I desire you will order him to be taken off.*" In these last particulars he differed widely from his friend POPE, who could stifle resentment, and wait with patience till a more distant, and perhaps a more seasonable hour of revenge. But notwithstanding the dissimilitude of minds, and manners, which was apparent between these two great men, yet the same sort of friendship seems to have subsisted between them, as between VIRGIL and HORACE. The mutual affection  
of

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 147

of the two English poets appears throughout their works: and therefore in this place, I cannot avoid taking notice of a report very industriously spread, and not without some degree of success, "That the friendship between POPE and SWIFT was not so firm and perfect at the latter end as at the beginning of their lives." On Dr. SWIFT's side, I am certain, it ever remained unalterable: nor did it appear less fervent on the side of Mr. POPE. Their letters are the best evidence to determine the doubt. In one of SWIFT's latest letters to me, not long before he was lost to all human comforts, he says, "*When you see my dear friend POPE, tell him I will answer his letter soon; I love him above all the rest of mankind.*" In my long correspondence with Mr. POPE I scarce received the least billet from him, without the kindest mention of Dr. SWIFT: and the tenderest anxiety for his state of health. Judge by the following paragraphs. The first, dated July the 12th, 1737.

*My Lord, The pleasure you gave me, in acquainting me of the Dean's better health, is one so truly great, as might content even your own humanity: and whatever my sincere opinion and respect of your Lordship prompts me to wish from your hands for myself, your love for him makes me as happy. Would to GOD my weight, added to your's, could turn his inclinations to this side, that I might live to enjoy him here thro' your means, and flatter myself 'twas partly thro' my own! But this, I fear, will never be the case; and I think it more probable, his attraction will*

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*draw me on the other side, which, I protest, nothing less than a probability of dying at sea, considering the weak frame of my breast, would have bindered me from, two years past. In short, whenever I think of him, 'tis with the vexation of all impotent passions that carry us out of ourselves only to spoil our quiet, and make us return to a resignation, which is the most melancholy of all virtues. And in another letter, dated April 2, 1738, he says, I write by the same post that I received your very obliging and humane letter. The consideration you shew towards me, in the just apprehension that any news of the Dean's condition might alarm me, is most kind and generous. The very last post I writ to him a long letter, little suspecting him in that dangerous circumstance. I was so far from fearing his health, that I was proposing schemes, and hoping possibilities for our meeting once more in this world. I am weary of it; and shall have one reason more, and one of the strongest that nature can give me (even when she is shaking my weak frame to pieces) to be willing to leave this world, when our dear friend is on the edge of the other. Yet I hope, I would fain hope, he may yet tarry a while on the brink of it, to preserve to this wretched age a relique and example of the last. One more quotation, and I have done. TWITNAM, November 7. When you get to Dublin (whither I direct this, supposing you will see our dear friend as soon as possible) pray put the Dean in mind of me, and tell him I hope he received my last. Tell him how dearly I love, and how greatly I honour him: how greatly I reflect on every testimony of his friendship; how much I resolve to give*  
*the*

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*the best I can of my esteem for him to posterity; and assure him the world has nothing in it I admire so much, nothing, the loss of which I should regret so much, as his genius and his virtues.*

My excuse, for I stand in need of one, by having inserted these scraps of letters, is my real desire of convincing you, that the affection of SWIFT and POPE subsisted as entire and uninterrupted as their friends could wish, or their enemies regret. It must be owned, that we as seldom see a mutual attachment between poets, as between statesmen. "True friendship, as TULLY observes, proceeds from a reciprocal esteem, and a virtuous resemblance of manners." When such is the basis, the variety in certain tenets and opinions is of no ill consequence to the union: and will scarce ever unloose the social ties of love, veneration, and esteem. Thus the friendship between ATTICUS and HORTENSIVS, although they were of different sects, one a Stoic, and the other an Epicurean, subsisted like Mr. POPE's and Dr. SWIFT's, firm and constant to the last, when that of ANTONY, LEPIDVS, and AUGUSTUS, continued no longer than while it was subservient to their views of interest. CATILINE says, *Idem velle, ac idem nolle, ea demum amicitia est.* This often attends a vitious conspiracy; and perhaps an agreement so perfectly mutual is scarce to be met with in any other instance. Emulation generally breaks the chain of friendship between poets. They are running with the utmost eagerness to the same goal; no



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wonder, if, in the race, they endeavour to trip up each others heels.

As I have often reverted in my mind certain particulars relating to my two poetical friends, I have always thought, that the circumstance of their pursuing different roads in poetry, and living in different kingdoms, was probably one of the happiest incidents in their lives. Such a separation prevented all personal dissensions, and fixt them in a correspondence, that constantly tended to establish their endearments; when, perhaps, a residence near each other, might have had a very contrary effect. It is much easier to rectify any mistake, or to cool any animosity that may have arisen, in a letter, than to recal a passionate verbal answer, especially if uttered with all the actions, and vehemence of anger. The impression of such a scene remains long upon the mind of the person offended, and the old adage is transposed, *Vox audita manet, litera scripta perit*. Few men can submit to contradiction. SWIFT was certainly not of the number, and therefore I am persuaded, that his distance from his English friends proved a strong incitement to their mutual affection. But, I must again repeat, that throughout the long series of letters which have been published, not the least altercations appear to have happened between SWIFT and POPE.

In all SWIFT's writings, you will find his own peculiar vein of humour. The same liberty of expression would have been improper and absurd in any other writer, but it produced the consequences which he desired.

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## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 151

His seeming arrogance gained him more favour, than the humility and affected benevolence of others. His raillery and freedom of censure are conveyed in a manner more prevalent, and perhaps often more agreeable than flattery. He seldom praised, but where merit was conspicuous. A single stroke of his pen pleased more, and gave more honour, than a long flattering dedication from any other author. His style was masterly, correct, and strong: never diffusive, yet always clear; and, if we consider it in comparison with his predecessors, he has outdone them all, and is one, perhaps the chief, of those few select English writers, who have excelled in elegance and propriety of language.

Lord BACON is the first author, who has attempted any style that can be relishable to the present age, for I must own to you, that I think SWIFT, and his contemporaries, have brought our language to the utmost degree of perfection, without the help of a LONGINUS, a QUINTILIAN, or even of a dictionary, or a grammar. Lord BACON has written with an infinite fund of knowledge: every science that he treats upon, is discussed by him with the greatest learning and dignity, and he shews himself at once a philosopher, an historian, a politician, and a divine: but his dialect (for that demands our present attention) is quibbling and pedantic; and never more so than when he condescends to flatter his royal master, and the minions of that court.

Consider the prosaical works of MILTON, you will find them more nervous than elegant; more distinguished by the strength of reason, than by the rules of rhetoric;

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toric; his diction is harsh, his periods tedious; and when he becomes a prose-writer, the majesty, that attends his poetry, vanishes, and is entirely lost: yet, with all his faults, and exclusive of his character as a poet, he must ever remain the only learned author of that tasteless age in which he flourished: and it is probable, that his great attention to the Latin language might have rendered him less correct, than he otherwise would have been, in his native tongue.

HARRINGTON has his admirers, he may possibly have his merits, but they *flow not* in his style. A later writer, of the same republican principles, has far excelled him; I mean ALGERNON SYDNEY, whose discourses concerning government are admirably written, and contain great historical knowledge, and a remarkable propriety of diction; so that his name, in my opinion, ought to be much higher established in the temple of literature, than I have hitherto found it placed.

LORD CLARENDON, is an historian whose dignity of expression has justly given him the preference to any of our biographical authors. But his periods are the *periods of a mile*. His parentheses embarrass the sense of his narration, and certain inaccuracies, appearing throughout his works, are delivered with a formality that renders them still more conspicuous.

Among our English writers, few men have gained a greater character for elegance and correctness, than SPRAT, Bishop of *Rochester*, and few men have deserved it less. When I have read his works, I have always

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wondered from whence such a piece of good fortune might have arisen, and could only attribute it to Mr. COWLEY, who, in a very delicate copy of verses, has celebrated his friend Dr. SPRAT for eloquence, wit, and a certain *candid style*, which the poet compares to the river *Thames*, gliding with an even current, and displaying the most beautiful appearances of nature. Poets and painters have their favourites, whom they transmit to posterity in what colours and attitudes they please: but I am mistaken, if, upon a review of SPRAT's works, his language will not sooner give you an idea of one of the insignificant tottering boats upon the *Thames*, than of the smooth noble current of the river itself.

Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE is an easy, careless, incorrect writer, elegantly negligent, politely learned, and engagingly familiar.

Thus, my dear HAM, I have cursorily mentioned some of the brightest sons of fame among our English authors, only to point out to you the preference due to DR. SWIFT: but he is not entitled alone to the olive garland: he has had his coadjutors in the victory. The triumvirate, to whom we owe an elegance and propriety unknown to our forefathers, are SWIFT, ADDISON, and BOLINGBROKE. At the sight of such names, no dispute can arise in preferring the English moderns to the English antients. The present century, and indeed all future generations may be congratulated upon the acquisition of three such men.

But

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BUT to return more closely to SWIFT. He has perfectly studied the drama of human life, and particularly the tendency and irregularities of its different characters. He has chosen, (as I dare say I have mentioned in former letters) to recommend virtue, by representing vice in a disagreeable and ridiculous light. As his temper was naturally full of acrimony, a certain innate severity runs throughout all his letters. You will find him, in the advice, which he offers to his friends, and in the general account which he gives of his own conduct, too close an œconomist. This parsimony proceeded from a desire of being independent: and since that was the cause, he will be forgiven, or, at least, excused by all honest men.

Mr. POPE had different talents from his friend SWIFT: his imagination was fine and delicate: his fancy was ever on the wing. In his earlier time of life, his way of thinking was diffusive, and consequently his judgement was unconfined. As that judgement ripened with years, he shewed the full strength of it in his *Ethic Epistles*, and his *Essay on Man*. There the poet has almost yielded to the philosopher; and his moral system has charmed more by the force of truth and reason, than even by the numbers with which he adorned it.

I cannot avoid thinking, that, in this particular branch of learning, Mr. POPE owed the exertion of his talents to Lord BOLINGBROKE, who had studied the procedure, and limits of the human understanding, as exactly as SWIFT had considered the irregularities of  
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the passions in different characters of the human species. Lord BOLINGBROKE had early made himself master of books and men: but, in his first career of life, being immersed at once in business and pleasure, he ran thorough a variety of scenes in a surprizing and eccentric manner. When his passions subsided by years and disappointments, and when he improved his rational faculties by more grave studies and reflection, he shone out in his retirement with a lustre peculiar to himself; though not seen by vulgar eyes. The gay statesman was changed into a philosopher equal to any of the sages of antiquity. The wisdom of SOCRATES, the dignity and ease of PLINY, and the wit of HORACE, appeared in all his writings and conversation.

But my letter is growing to an intolerable length. It is time to finish it; and believe me, HAMILTON, were my letters to fill reams of paper, they would be written only with a view of repeating the dictates of my heart, which, in its last beating moments, will throb towards you, and those other dear objects, to whom I am

*An affectionate Father,*

O R R E R Y.



## L E T T E R XX.

I Have been reading this morning a long letter from Dr. SWIFT to Mr. POPE, dated at *Dublin, January 10, 1721*<sup>a</sup>, and I have been confined to a greater share

<sup>a</sup> Volume VII. Page 12.

of

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of attention, as it seems to furnish more materials of his life and principles, than any other of his epistolary writings. The letter breathes an air of sincerity and freedom, and is addressed to a particular friend, at a time when the views of ambition were at an end. It may therefore be considered as a confession of one departing from this world, who only is desirous to vindicate his own character, and is anxious that his ashes may rest in peace.

It was written immediately after the arbitrary conduct of a judge in *Ireland*, who endeavoured to destroy the freedom of juries, and consequently the very essence of that liberty and safety, which we have a right to possess by the constitution of our state. SWIFT very generously declares himself averse to all rigorous proceedings against persons suspected of problematical guilt. "*By such strict enquiries, says he, a gate is left open to the whole tribe of informers, the most accursed, prostitute, and abandoned race that God ever permitted to plague mankind.*" Upon this subject I cannot avoid recollecting some particulars from a book, which has lately given me great delight and instruction, and which I recommend very warmly to your perusal. I mean *L'Esprit des Loix*. The author of that book, MONSIEUR DE MONTESQUIEU observes, "that informers have been chiefly encouraged under the most tyrannical governments. In the reign of TIBERIUS triumphal ornaments were conferred upon them, and statues erected to their honour. In the reign of  
" NERO,

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“ NERO, upon the discovery and punishment of a pretended conspiracy, triumphal dignities were allotted to TURPILIANUS, COCCEIUS NERVA, and TIGILLINUS.” In another part of his book, the BARON DE MONTESQUIEU takes notice, “ that in *Turkey*, where little regard is shewn to the honour, lives, or estates of the subject, all causes are determined by the presiding Bashaw: and in *Rome*, the judges had no more to do than to declare, that the person accused was guilty of a particular crime, and then the punishment was found in the laws.” From these and other examples of arbitrary government, this elegant author takes a particular pleasure in distinguishing, and admiring the civil constitution of *England*, where, he says, “ the jury determine, whether the fact, brought under their cognizance, be proved or not; if it be proved, the judge pronounces the punishment inflicted by the law for such a particular fact: and for this, adds the BARON, he need only open his eyes.” But if MONSIEUR DE MONTESQUIEU had read SWIFT’s letter, or indeed had recollected many notorious facts of our history, he must have observed, that the judges have been often deaf to the repeated voice of the jury, and have not only shut their eyes, against our excellent laws, but have assumed “ that terrible and menacing air, which COMMODUS ordered to be given to his statues.”

The method of trials by juries is generally looked upon as one of the most excellent branches of our constitution. In theory it certainly appears in that light.



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According to the original establishment, the jurors are to be men of competent fortunes in the neighbourhood: and are to be so avowedly indifferent between the parties concerned, that no reasonable exception can be made to them on either side. In treason the person accused has a right to challenge five and thirty, and in felony twenty, without shewing cause of challenge. Nothing can be more equitable. No prisoner can desire a fairer field. But the misfortune is, that our juries are often composed of men of mean estates, and low understandings, and many difficult points of law are brought before them, and submitted to their verdict, when perhaps they are not capable of determining, properly and judiciously, such nice matters of justice, although the judges of the court explain the nature of the case, and the law which arises upon it. But, if they are not defective in knowledge, they are sometimes, I fear, from their station and indigence, liable to corruption. This indeed is an objection more to the privilege lodged with juries, than to the institution itself. The point, most liable to objection, is the power, which any one, or more of the twelve have to starve the rest into a compliance with their opinion; so that the verdict may possibly be given by strength of constitution, not by conviction of conscience: "*and wretches hang that jurymen may dine.*" All this by the by. Now let us return to SWIFT's letter of the tenth of *January*.

In it, is most evidently displayed his immutable attachment to *Ireland*. Such a kind of patriotism must have

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have proceeded from a true love of liberty; for he hated individuals, and despised most of the men of property and power in that kingdom: he owed them no obligations, and while by his writings he laboured to make their posterity happy, he forced from themselves an involuntary, but universal applause. His conduct was so uniform, and constant in the cause of *Ireland*, that he not only gained the praise, but the confidence of that whole nation, who are a people seldom, if ever, inclined to study and pursue their own interest, and who are always exceedingly apt to suspect any advice that is contrary, or in defiance to a ministerial direction.

SWIFT'S principles of government seem to have been founded upon that excellent maxim, *Salus populi suprema est lex*. He begins by clearing himself from Jacobitism. He speaks of the revolution as a necessary but dangerous expedient, which has since been attended with unavoidable bad consequences. He declares his mortal antipathy to standing armies in time of peace. He adores the wisdom of that institution which rendered our parliaments annual. He prefers the landed to the monied interest, and expresses a noble abhorrence to the suspension of those laws, upon which the liberty of the subject depends. When these articles of his political tenets are examined, they will leave no room for any one particular party to assume the honour of having had him in their alliance. He was neither Whig nor Tory, neither Jacobite nor Republican. He was DOCTOR SWIFT.

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His judgment, in relation to the visible decay of literature and good sense, is perfectly just. He attributes this national calamity to the prevailing luxury of the times, which he instances in the encouragement of factions, and of several public diversions, all tending to the encrease of folly, ignorance, and vice. His sentiments are delivered more with the air of a philosopher than of a divine: and the conclusion of the letter is so proper, and so excellent a defence of his own manner of acting and thinking, that, in regard to his memory, I must be at the trouble of transcribing it.

*" All I can reasonably hope for, says SWIFT, by this letter, is to convince my friends and others, who are pleased to wish me well, that I have neither been so ill a subject, nor so stupid an author, as I have been represented by the virulence of libellers, whose malice hath taken the same train in both, by fathering dangerous principles in government upon me, which I never maintained, and insipid productions, which I am not capable of writing. For, however I may have been sowed by personal ill treatment, or by melancholy prospects for the public, I am too much a politician to expose my own safety by offensive words, and, if my genius and spirit be sunk by encreasing years, I have at least enough discretion left, not to mistake the measure of my own abilities, by attempting subjects where those talents are necessary, which perhaps I may have lost with my youth."*

\* Vol. VII. Page 26.

I have

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I have chosen out this particular letter, as one of the most serious and best performances that he has given us in the epistolary way. But, if I am to declare my opinion of the whole collection in the seventh volume, I own to you, it has not answered my expectation. The index at the beginning will make you hope for great treasures, from the illustrious names that are there inserted: but, in your pursuit, you will scarce find any remarkable instructions of morality, or even the common reasonings and refinements that might naturally arise from so high a class of men, in the ordinary current of their thoughts. What is more surprising, you will seldom discover any keen strokes of satir, or any instantaneous sallies of vivacity. I have often heard SWIFT say, "*When I sit down to write a letter, I never lean upon my elbow, till I have finished it.*" By which expression he meant, that he never studied for particular phrases, or polished paragraphs: his letters therefore are the truer representations of his mind. They are written in the warmth of his affections, and when they are considered in the light of kindness and sincerity, they illustrate his character to a very high degree. Throughout his various correspondence you will discover very strong marks of an anxious, benevolent friend: and, to my great pleasure, I find the misanthrope often lost in the good-natured man. Read his letters to Mr. GAY, and you will be of my sentiment; read those to Dr. SHERIDAN, in the eighth volume \*, and you will be farther confirmed in

\* Beginning at p. 384.

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that opinion ; we may compound therefore to lose satire and raillery, when we gain humanity and tenderness in their stead : yet, even in some of his highest scenes of benevolence, his expressions are delivered in such a manner, as to seem rather the effects of haughtiness than of good-nature : but you must never look upon him as a traveller in the common road. He must be viewed by a *camera obscura* that turns all objects the contrary way. When he appears most angry, he is most pleased <sup>b</sup> ; when most humble, he is most assuming <sup>c</sup>. Such was the man, and in such variegated colours must he be painted.

The letters from Lord BOLINGBROKE, which are inserted in this collection, are written with an elegance and politeness that distinguish them from all the rest. We see they were not intended for the press ; but how valuable are the most careless strokes of such a pen !

GAY's letters have nothing in them striking or commendatory. His sentiments are those of an honest, indolent, good-natured man. He loved SWIFT to a degree of veneration : and the friendship was returned with great sincerity. SWIFT writes to him in the same strain as he would have written to a son ; and seems to distinguish him as the correspondent to whom he has not the least grain of reserve. In the several accounts which he gives of his situation at *Dublin*, and the idle manner of

<sup>b</sup> See his letters to GAY, and to the Duchess of Queensborough, in Vol. VII.

<sup>c</sup> See his letter to Lord PALMERSTON, Vol. VIII. page 373.

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his passing his time there, he writes sometimes in an ironical, and sometimes in a contrary style. But, in one of his letters, dated *August* 28, 1731<sup>a</sup>, he tells GAY, "that the most arrant trifles of his former writings are "serious philosophical lucubrations, in comparison to "what he now busies himself about;" and his conclusive words are, "*As the world may one day see.*" By this desire of *letting the world see* what other men of less wit, and more discretion, would carefully have concealed, he has placed himself open to the censure of his enemies, and beyond the reach of any defence from his friends. He has not only committed to the press a most despicable heap of writings, but has publicly recorded the lowest amusements of his private scenes of life, without having once suspected, that persons, whose stations, or abilities, have fixed them in a conspicuous attitude, are looked upon by the rest of mankind with a very critical, and a very envious eye. AUGUSTUS, as I remember, was a little ashamed to be discovered at a game of cobnuts; and even DOMITIAN was cunning enough to withdraw into his closet to catch flies. Great minds, you will say, require to be often unbent. I allow it; but those relaxations might be chosen, so as to make idleness appear in a beautiful light: and SWIFT would have forfeited a less degree of fame by playing many years at push-pin (the records of which he could not have printed), than by composing various kinds of *nonsense*, which, by his own opinion, have been honoured with a place in his works.

<sup>a</sup> Vol. VII. Letter LIII. page 185.

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I should have been much pleased, in finding some of Dr. ARBUTHNOT's letters among this collection. Although he was justly celebrated for wit and learning, there was an excellence in his character more amiable than all his other qualifications: I mean the excellence of his heart. He has shewed himself equal to any of his cotemporaries in humour and vivacity: and he was superior to most men in acts of humanity and benevolence: his very sarcasms are the satirical strokes of good-nature; they are like slaps on the face given in jest, the effects of which may raise blushes, but no blackness will appear after the blows. He laughs as jovially as an attendant upon BACCHUS, but continues as sober and considerate as a disciple of SOCRATES. He is seldom serious, except in his attacks upon vice; and then his spirit rises with a manly strength, and a noble indignation. His epitaph upon CHARTRES <sup>a</sup> (allowing one small alteration, the word *permitted*, instead of *connived at*) is a complete, and a masterly composition in its kind. No man exceeded him in the moral duties of life: a merit still more to his honour, as the ambitious powers of wit and genius are seldom submissive enough to confine themselves within the limitations of morality. In his letter to Mr POPE <sup>b</sup>, written, as it were, upon his death-bed, he discovers such a noble fortitude of mind at the approach of his

<sup>a</sup> See POPE's Works, by WARBURTON, Vol. III. page 219.

<sup>b</sup> See again POPE by WARBURTON, Vol. VIII. Letter XLVII.

dissolution,

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diffolution, as could be inspired only by a clear conscience, and the calm retrospect of an uninterrupted series of virtue. The DEAN <sup>a</sup> laments the loss of him with a pathetic sincerity. "*The death of Mr. GAY and the DOCTOR* <sup>b</sup> (says he to Mr. POPE) *have been terrible wounds to my heart. Their living would have been a great comfort to me, although I should never have seen them; like a sum of money in a bank, from which I should receive at least annual interest, as I do from you, and have done from Lord BOLINGBROKE.*" I have chosen this last quotation, not more in honour of SWIFT's tenderness and affection to those whom he esteemed, than with a design of specifying to you as fine a group of friends, as have appeared since the Augustan age. As their letters were not intended for the public, perhaps I was unreasonable in looking for medals, and not being contented with the common current species. In our prejudices of favour or aversion we are apt to be deceived by names; nor can it be doubted, that such writers might have furnished us with familiar letters, very different from those, which have been collected in this seventh volume. They are filled indeed (especially in the correspondence between SWIFT and POPE) with the strongest expressions of mutual esteem; but those expressions are repeated too often. When friendship has subsisted so long, that time can-

<sup>a</sup> SWIFT's Vol. VII. Letter LXX.

<sup>b</sup> ARBUTHNOT.

<sup>c</sup> Lord BOLINGBROKE, SWIFT, POPE, ARBUTHNOT, GAY.



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not encrease, nor words improve it, the commerce of affection between friends ought to be carried on in a style that neither sinks below politeness, nor rises into forced compliments. I cannot avoid observing the epistolary conciseness that was in fashion among the antients, especially their conclusive sentences, [*vale*. Or again, *Si valeas, bene est, valeo*.:] which I own seems preferable to our method of loading every letter with compliments, not only to wives and children, but to uncles, aunts, and cousins: and of consequence, every relation, that is not particularly named, is particularly affronted. It will appear too minute a criticism to affirm, that the English language is not well adapted for epistolary writings: be that as it may, it is certainly inferior to the French, which engages, and perhaps improves us by a successive flow of phrases that are peculiar to that nation. MADAME DE SEVIGNE has filled four volumes of letters, all addressed to her daughter: they contain nothing, except different scenes of maternal fondness; yet, like a classic, the oftener they are read, the more they are relished. MONSIEUR DE PELISSON has published three volumes of letters, which he calls *Lettres Historiques*, and which are little else than materials for a gazette: they inform us at what time the *grand Monarque* arose; when he went to bed; at what hour he dined; and what he said while he was at supper: yet all these trifles are told in so agreeable a manner, and appear so natural and easy, that I can scarce think the skill of OVID greater, who, in his *Fasti*, has turned the Roman Calendar into elegant poetry, and has versified a set of old Almanacs. I need not mention

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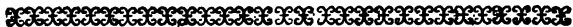
tion VOITURE OF BALZAC; and perhaps it was wrong to turn aside into the Roman and the French territories, when I ought to have confined myself to the British islands; but I love to wander about with you, and in writing, as in walking, to peep into every corner that may afford us matter of entertainment.

*I am, my dear HAMILTON,*

*Your ever-affectionate Father,*

ORRERY.

P. S. At the latter end of the seventh volume is a pamphlet written in the year 1714. It is entitled, *Free Thoughts upon the present State of Affairs*. When you have read it, *digito compeſce labellum*.



## L E T T E R XXI.

*My dear HAMILTON,*

**I**T is scarce possible to know in what manner to comment upon the last volume of the Dean's works. A general confusion and disorder runs throughout the whole; and one of the first pieces is, what ought to have been the last, Dr. SWIFT's *Will*: which, like all his other writings, is drawn up in his own peculiar manner.

M 4

Even

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Even in so serious a composition he cannot help indulging himself, in leaving legacies that carry with them an air of raillery and jest. He disposes of his three hats (his best, his second best, and his third best beaver) with an ironical solemnity, that renders the bequests ridiculous. He bequeaths "*to Mr. JOHN GRATTAN a silver box, to keep in it the tobacco which the said JOHN usually chewed, called pigtail.*" But his legacy to Mr. ROBERT GRATTAN is still more extraordinary. "*Item, I bequeath to the Reverend Mr. ROBERT GRATTAN, Prebendary of St. Audeon's, my strong box, on condition of his giving the sole use of the said box to his brother, Dr. JAMES GRATTAN, during the life of the said Doctor, who hath more occasion for it.*" These are so many last impressions of his turn, and way of thinking: and, I dare say, the persons thus distinguished look upon these instances as affectionate memorials of his friendship, and as tokens of the jocular manner in which he had treated them during his life-time.

His monumental inscription, written by himself, and inserted at the beginning of his *Will*, may confirm to you the observation which I made in a former letter, that he was not an elegant writer of Latin. An harsher epitaph has seldom been composed. It is scarce intelligible; and if intelligible, is a proof how difficult a task it is, even for the greatest genius, to draw his own character, or to represent himself and his actions in a proper manner to posterity.

I am now drawing towards the last scene of his life. The total deprivation of his senses came upon him by degrees.

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degrees. In the year 1736. I remember him seized with a violent fit of giddiness. He was at that time writing a satirical poem, called *The Legion Club*; but he found the effects of his giddiness so dreadful, that he left the poem unfinished; and never afterwards attempted a composition of any length either in verse or prose. However, his conversation still remained the same; lively and severe; but his memory gradually grew worse and worse: and as that decreased, and was impaired, he appeared every day more fretful and impatient. From the year *thirty-nine* to the latter end of the year *forty-one*, his friends found his passions so violent and ungovernable, his memory so decayed, and his reason so depraved, that they took the utmost precautions to keep all strangers from approaching him: for, till then, he had not appeared totally incapable of conversation: but, early in the year *forty-two*, the small remains of his understanding became entirely confused, and the violence of his rage increased absolutely to a degree of madness. In this miserable state he seemed to be appointed as the first proper inhabitant for his own hospital; especially as from an outrageous lunatic, he sunk afterwards into a quiet, speechless idiot; and dragged out the remainder of his life in that helpless situation. He died towards the latter end of *October* 1745. The manner of his death was easy, without the least pang or convulsion. Even the rattling in his throat was scarce sufficient to give any alarm to his attendants, till within some very little time before he expired. A man in possession of his reason would have wished for such a kind of dissolution; but Swift was totally insensible of happiness

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happiness or pain: he had not even the power or expression of a child, appearing, for some years before his death, reserved only as an example to mortify human pride, and to reverse that fine description of human nature, which is given us by *Shakespeare* in an inimitable manner: "*What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals.*" Thus poets paint; but how vain and perishable is the picture? The smallest thunderbolt from heaven blasts it in a moment, and every tinct is so effectually obliterated, that scarce the outlines of the figure remain.

SWIFT, as I have hinted in a former letter\*, certainly foresaw his fate. His frequent attacks of giddiness, and his manifest defect of memory, gave room for such apprehensions. I have often heard him lament the state of childhood, and idiotism, to which some of the greatest men of this nation were reduced before their death. He mentioned, as examples within his own time, the duke of MARLBOROUGH, and Lord SOMERS: and when he cited these melancholy instances, it was always with a heavy sigh, and with gestures that shewed great uneasiness, as if he felt an impulse of what was to happen to him before he died.

Unless I am misinformed, he died worth about twelve thousand pounds, inclusive of the specific legacies mentioned in his will, and which may be computed at the

\* See Letter VI.

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sum of twelve hundred pounds ; so that the remainder, near eleven thousand pounds, is entirely applicable to the hospital for idiots and lunatics : a charitable foundation, particularly beneficial in these kingdoms, where the epidemic distemper of lunacy is so prevalent, that it will constantly furnish the largest building with a sufficient number of inhabitants.

Lunacy may in general be considered as arising from a depraved imagination ; and must therefore be originally owing to a fault in the body, or the mind. We see instances every day, where, in fevers, all the powers of sense and reason are utterly overturned by a raging madness : this frenzy conquers, or is conquered, soon : but, from more slow and chronical causes, such obstructions may be formed, as gradually to produce various degrees of this disorder, and to remain invincible to the very last moments of life. Nothing more strongly disposes the mind to this depraved state, than too fixed an attention to any particular object. Mr. LOCKE, if my memory does not deceive me, defines madness as arising from some particular idea, or set of ideas, that make so strong an impression upon the mind, as to banish all others : and the persons affected are chearful or melancholy, well-tempered or fierce, according as the objects and ideas of their minds are different. From hence it is evident, that we ought to consider the strength of the mind even in the pursuit of knowledge, and often to vary our ideas by exercise and amusements ; constantly fixing a strict guard against any passion, that may be prevalent in too high a degree, or may acquire an habitual strength  
and

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and dominion over us. Passions are the gales of life; and it is our part to take care, that they do not rise into a tempest.

Love, with all its charms, must be restrained within proper bounds, otherwise it will torture that breast which it was formed to delight. Love contains within itself a variety of other passions, and lays such a foundation of madness in the mind, that the frenzy, in this particular case, never fails to appear in its full force, and to display itself in all its strength of horror.

Religion, which can only make the mind happy, and is our surest and best defence against the passions, if considered in a wrong and melancholy view, has often perverted the seat of reason, and given more inhabitants to *Bedlam* than any other cause. A religious lunatic is miserable, even to the deepest tortures of despair.

The miser, whom I must always rank among madmen, heaps up gold with an anxiety that affects his looks, his appetite, and his sleep. The wretch dreads poverty in the center of plenty; and starves, only because he dares not taste those fruits which appear most agreeable to his desires.

In some other species of madness, the persons affected are really more happy than in their senses; and it is almost a crime to banish the agreeable delusion. You remember the case of the citizen of *Argos*, who, after a salutiferous dose of hellebore, cried out,

*Pol me occidisti, amici,  
Non servasti (ait) cui sic extorta voluptas,  
Et demptus per vim meritis gratissimus error.*

Such

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Such again would be the case of the beau of *Bedlam*, who, amidst darkness and confinement, still retains his pride and self-admiration; dresses himself up in straw instead of embroidery; and, when suffered to go to the window, imagines that he captivates every female, who chances to pass thro' *Moor-fields*. Is not such a man happier in his madness, than in his senses?

To specify the many different classes of madmen would be endless. They are innumerable: so that it is almost a rare felicity to enjoy *mens sana in corpore sano*. Some men have owed their reputation and success in the world to a tincture of madness, while others, merely from a superior understanding, have been ranked among lunatics: of the latter sort HIPPOCRATES (whom I wish you to look upon as a classic author, as well as a physician) gives a remarkable instance in one of his letters. He says, he was sent for by the people of *Abdera* to cure DEMOCRITUS of madness; but, to his surprise, he found him the wisest man of the age; and, by his laughing manner of talking and reasoning, he almost convinced HIPPOCRATES, that all the rest of the world, except DEMOCRITUS, were mad. It is not improbable, that madness has been coeval with mankind. There have certainly been many instances of it among the Greeks and Romans: among the Jews, the enthusiastic fury of SAUL is equally remarkable with the ecstatic rage of NEBUCHADNEZZAR: nor have any parts of the world, I believe, entirely escaped this raging evil. It was frequently mistaken for inspiration, and the prophetic Sibyls were obliged to put on the airs and looks of madness, to obtain



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tain an implicit belief to their prophecies. From these sacerdotal impositions, mad people reaped some remarkable advantages. They were often looked upon as messengers sent by heaven, to declare the will of the gods, and the prophetic decrees of fate: they were revered as persons sacred and divine; and, instead of scourges, they received tokens of adoration. In how great a degree must the subtilty of priests have prevailed, when they could make one of the greatest curses that attends human life, appear one of the greatest blessings?

Lunatics are so called from the influence which the moon has over bodies, when its attractive power is greatest; by which means the pressure of the atmosphere being lessened, the humours of the body are more rarefied, and produce a greater plenitude in the vessels of the brain. This has been illustrated by our good and learned friend Dr. MEAD, in his treatise *De imperio lune et solis*; and I have particularly observed, that in the last book\*, which he published, he takes notice in his chapter *de Insania*, "that the blood of such persons, who have  
" been most liable to this malady, was thick and fizy,  
" and, upon dissection, their brain always appeared dry,  
" and their vessels filled with black sluggish blood:" from whence, perhaps, we may, in some measure, account for the principal source of SWIFT's lunacy: his countenance being dark, bilious, and gloomy, and his eyes sometimes fixed, and immoveable for a long time. HORACE, I remember, attributes the madness of ORESTES to a physical cause, where he says,

\* Entitled, *Monita & præcepta medica.*

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*vocando*

*Hanc furiam, hunc aliud, jussit quod splendida bilis.*

So that diseases, formed originally in the mind, often bring on this disorder, and by degrees affect the body; especially in such constitutions as have any tendency to this distemper. But what can be the reason, that it is so remarkably epidemic in these kingdoms? I am inclined to believe, that it must be owing to the grossness of our food, and to our immoderate use of spirituous liquors: the one frequently causing the deepest melancholy, the other the most unlimited rage. Our climate is so variable and uncertain, and our atmosphere is so perpetually filled with clouds and sulphureous vapours, that these causes must necessarily have a great effect upon the natural impatience and inconstancy of the inhabitants. We are apt to revel in a free indulgence of our passions; and they are as apt to agitate and enervate the fibres of the brain, and to imprint by degrees many fatal impressions, that can never be eradicated from the mind. Even the greatest blessing we enjoy, the freedom of our laws, may, I am afraid, in some measure, contribute to those rash actions, that often end in dreadful murders of the worst kind, parricide, and suicide. Men must be reckon'd in the highest class of lunatics, who are capable of offending the great Author of nature, by depriving themselves of that life, which he only has a right of taking away, because he only had the power of giving it. No person in his senses can voluntarily

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prefer death to life. Our desires of existence are strong and prevalent. They are born with us; and our ideas of a future state are not sufficiently clear, to make us fond of hurrying into eternity; especially as eternity itself must ever remain incomprehensible to finite beings. Human nature has an abhorrence; and a terror, of its own dissolution. The philosopher submits to death; because he looks upon it as a necessary event: in the mean time, he uses every method of prudence, and every art of caution, to lengthen out life as far as he possibly can extend it, and to prevent the least accident that may bring on death one hour sooner than the laws of the human structure require. The military hero meets the king of terrors more from the dictates of reason, than the impulses of nature. His fame, his fortune, every object that can be dear to him, depend upon his resolution to die. He exposes himself to the danger of being destroyed; because an effort of securing his life must be attended with contempt and infamy. But, on the other hand, who would wantonly chuse death, unless he were agitated to such a choice by the fumes and vapours of a disordered brain?

The subjects, where arbitrary power is established, live in a continual state of dread and apprehension, and all their other passions are subdued by fear: so that fewer instances of suicide have appeared in despotic governments, than in kingdoms, where liberty is more prevalent, and where the passions are less restrained.

The diet, the air, and the political constitution of a country, give the peculiar and distinguishing character  
of

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of the people : and as the characteristics change, the inhabitants undergo the same metamorphoses. How different are the modern Italians from the antient Romans ! If BRUTUS were now living, he would probably acquiesce in the depending state of a cardinal, and the papal crown would be unanimously presented to CÆSAR.

The melancholy case of Dr. SWIFT has, I find, seduced me into a long digression : when I am writing to you, my HAM, I give a full scope to my thoughts, and wander licentiously out of my sphere. I aim at placing all observations in your way, which I think can be of any use in your future road of life. But, why talk to you on the melancholy effects of madness ? only, my dear son, to observe in general, that temperance, exercise, philosophy, and true religion, are the surest means to make men happy, and to preserve them from a contagious malady, to which the inhabitants of these kingdoms are unfortunately liable.

A state of idiotism is less deplorable, not less shocking, than that of madness. Idiots are afflicted with no turbulent passions : they are innocent and harmless, and often excite pity, but never occasion fear. The proverb tells us, *They are the favourites of fortune* : but I suppose it alludes only to those fools, who can number twenty rightly, and can tell the days of the week ; and alas ! those are no idiots in the eye of the law. The absolute naturals owe their wretchedness to a wrong formation in their brain, or to accidents in their birth, or the dregs of fevers, and other violent distempers. The last was the case of the Dean of St. PATRICK'S, according to

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the account sent me by his two relations Mrs. WHITEWAY, and Mr. SWIFT <sup>a</sup>: neither of whom, I think, makes the least mention of a deafness, that from time to time attacked the Dean, and rendered him extremely miserable. You will find him complaining of this misfortune in several parts of his writings, especially in his letters (of the eighth volume) to Dr. SHERIDAN <sup>b</sup>. Possibly some internal pressure upon his brain might first have affected the auditory nerves, and then, by degrees, might have encreased, so as entirely to stop up that fountain of ideas, which had before spread itself in the most diffusive, and surprising manner.

Having just now hinted to you the advantages that have accrued to madmen, I ought not to omit the honours that have been paid to fools. In former ages the courts of France and England were not thought completely embellished without a favourite idiot, who bore the title of the King's Jester, and was as remarkably distinguished by a cap and bells, as his royal master was distinguished by a diadem and robes. This animal, like JUNIUS BRUTUS, frequently assumed the face and behaviour of folly, to answer his own particular views and advantages. His bluntness and simplicity recommended him in those places, where truths, if spoken by a man of sense, were disagreeable and dangerous. If he had not the honour, like BRUTUS, to save his country, at least he had the happiness to secure himself: and his ex-

<sup>a</sup> See page 89, and page 91.

<sup>b</sup> See Vol. VIII. page 419.

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pressions were often so full of humour and sarcasm, that, to this day, they are recorded as pieces of wit. Such was the famous reply of ARCHY to King JAMES the first, when his Majesty, amidst all his wisdom, was sufficiently inspired with folly, to send his only son into Spain. But, fools at present are no longer admired in courts, or, if they are, they appear there without their cap and bells.

And now, my dear HAMILTON, to quit reflexions, that tend in general rather to terrify, than to improve your understanding, let me observe, in honour of my friend SWIFT, that his establishment of an hospital for idiots and lunatics is remarkably generous: as the unhappy persons, who receive the benefit, must, for ever, remain insensible of their benefactor.

*I am your affectionate Father,*

ORRERY.



## LETTER XXII.

**T**HE *Directions to Servants*, which is the tract immediately following SWIFT's *Will*, is imperfect and unfinished. The editor tells us, that a preface and a dedication were to have been added to it. I think it was not published till after the Dean's death; but I remember the manuscript handed about, and much applauded,

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in his life-time. To say the most that can be offered in its favour, the tract is written in so facetious a kind of low humour, that it must please many readers: nor is it without some degree of merit, by pointing out with an amazing exactness (and what in a less trivial case must have been called judgment) the faults, blunders, tricks, lyes, and various knaveries of domestic servants. How much time must have been employed in putting together such a work! What an intenseness of thought must have been bestowed upon the lowest, and most slavish scenes of life! It is one of those compositions, that the utmost strength of wit can scarce sustain from sinking. A man of SWIFT's exalted genius ought constantly to have soared into higher regions. He ought to have looked upon persons of inferior abilities, as children, whom nature had appointed him to instruct, encourage, and improve. Superior talents seem to have been intended by Providence as public benefits; and the person, who possesses such blessings, is certainly answerable to Heaven for those endowments, which he enjoys above the rest of mankind. Let him jest with dignity, and let him be ironical upon useful subjects; leaving poor slaves to *beat their porridge*, or *drink their small beer*, in such vessels as they shall find proper<sup>a</sup>. The Dean, it seems, had not this way of thinking: and having long indulged his passions at last, perhaps mistook them for his duty. The mistake, my dear HAMILTON, is neither extraordinary nor surprising. In points of religion it has carried men into

<sup>a</sup> See Vol. VIII. page 8.

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great extravagancies; in those of morality, into no less; but in politics, into the greatest of all. Our inclinations are so apt to hurry us into inconsiderate actions, that we are afterwards inclined to flatter ourselves they are right, only because they have proceeded from our own thoughts and directions. Thus SWIFT, when he had once established the rule of *Vive la bagatelle*, was resolved to pursue it at all hazards. I wish his thoughts had taken another turn. The lower classes of mankind pass on unnoticed; the great only are censured. They ought to be particularly attentive to every step they take. The Dean of St. PATRICK's should have known himself, as *Rex idem hominum, Phœbique sacerdos*, and should have remembered, that kings and priests are extremely liable to be censured. Poor SWIFT! why did he sink below himself, before he was deprived of reason? Forgive him that error, my HAMILTON, and draw a veil of oblivion over certain excrescencies of wit and humour; you will then admire him, as an honour to the public, and a scourge to all the knaves and fools of his time.

Three pamphlets, relating to *Ireland*, successively follow the *Directions to Servants*. The first is entitled, *Reasons humbly offered to the Parliament of Ireland, for repealing the Sacramental Test in favour of the Catholics*: The second, *Some Reasons against the Bill for settling the Tythe of Hemp, Flax, &c. by a Modus*: The third, *Some farther Reasons against the Bill for settling the Tythe of Hemp, Flax, &c.* The subject-matter of these pamphlets may perhaps be little worth your consideration; but their style will always command your attention.



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They are very much misplaced, and, in any more methodical edition of the Dean's works, ought to appear with such other pieces, as have been composed by him against the dissenters. The first tract is written under the assumed character of a Roman catholic, by which means the author attacks his adversaries with a great advantage. He freely acknowledges the several atrocious crimes of the papists; but at the same time palliates them so skillfully, that, from that very acknowledgment, he enables himself to aim the heavier blows at the presbyterians. A paragraph extracted from the pamphlet will exemplify my meaning. *"We allow, says he, the CATHOLICS to be BRETHREN of the Dissenters; some people, indeed (which we cannot allow), would have them to be our children; because we both dissent from the church established, and both agree in abolishing this persecuting sacramental test; by which NEGATIVE DISCOURAGEMENT we are both rendered incapable of civil and military employments. However, we cannot but wonder at the bold familiarity of these schismatics, in calling the members of the national church their BRETHREN and FELLOW-PROTESTANTS. It is true, that all these sects (except the CATHOLICS) are BRETHREN to each other in faction, ignorance, iniquity, perverseness, pride, and (if we except the QUAKERS) in rebellion. But, how the churchmen can be styled their FELLOW-PROTESTANTS, we cannot comprehend. Because, when the whole BABEL of sectaries joined against the Church, the King, and the Nobility, for twenty years, in a MATCH AT FOOT-BALL; where the proverb expressly tells us,*

*"that*

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“that ALL ARE FELLOWS; while the three kingdoms  
 “were tossed to and fro, the churches and cities, and royal  
 “palaces, shattered to pieces by their BALLS, their BUF-  
 “FETS, and their KICKS; the victors would allow no  
 “more FELLOWS AT FOOT-BALL: but murdered, seques-  
 “tered, plundered, deprived, banished to the plantations,  
 “or enslaved, all their opposers who had LOST THE  
 “GAME.” The greatest art, and the keenest strokes of  
 irony, display themselves throughout the whole composi-  
 tion: and the conclusion of it is drawn up with a mix-  
 ture of serious and ironical arguments that seem to defy  
 all kinds of refutation.

The two next pamphlets *for settling the Tythe of Hemp,*  
*&c. by a Modus*, are entirely adapted to the clergy of  
*Ireland*; but I cannot avoid observing in those papers a  
 greater fund of calmness, nor a less degree of spirit, than  
 in many other of SWIFT's political writings.

The remainder of this volume is like a garden over-  
 run with docks and thistles, among which some rose-  
 trees accidentally make their appearance. The scythe  
 of time, or the weeding-knife of a judicious editor, will  
 cut down the docks and thistles, but the beauty of the  
 roses will particularly appear in some sermons that are  
 curious; and curious for such reasons, as would make  
 other works despicable. They were written in a careless,  
 hurrying manner, and were the offspring of necessity, not  
 of choice: so that you will see the original force of his  
 genius more in these compositions, than were the legiti-  
 mate sons of duty, than in other pieces, that were the na-  
 tural sons of love. They were held in such low esteem

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in his own thoughts, that some years before he died, he gave away the whole collection to Dr. SHERIDAN, with the utmost indifference: "*Here, says he, are a bundle of my old sermons; you may have them if you please: they may be of use to you; they have never been of any to me.*"

The parcel given to Dr. SHERIDAN consisted, as I have heard, of about five-and-thirty sermons. Three or four only are published; and those I have read over with attention. The first is upon *Mutual Subjection*, and that duty which is owing from one man to another. A clearer style, or a discourse more properly adapted to a public audience, can scarce be framed. Every paragraph is simple, nervous, and intelligible. The threads of each argument are closely connected, and logically pursued: but in places where the Dean has the least opportunity to introduce political maxims, or to dart an arrow at the conduct of princes, he never fails to indulge himself in his usual manner of thinking, as you will judge from the following quotations: "*A wise man, says Dr. SWIFT,*  
*" who doth not assist with his counsels; a great man with*  
*" his protection; a rich man with his bounty and charity;*  
*" and a poor man with his labour, are perfect nuisances in*  
*" a commonwealth. Neither is any condition of life more*  
*" honourable in the sight of GOD than another; otherwise*  
*" he would be a respecter of persons, which he assureth us*  
*" he is not: for he hath proposed the same salvation to*  
*" all men, and hath only placed them in different ways or*  
*" stations to work it out. Princes are born with no more*  
*" advantages of strength or wisdom than other men; and,*  
*" by an unhappy education, are usually more defective in both*  
*" than*

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"*than thousands of their subjects* <sup>a</sup>." Again, in the same strain, "*The best prince is, in the opinion of wise men, only the greatest servant of the nation; not only a servant to the public in general, but in some sort to every man in it* <sup>b</sup>." But the most extraordinary passage is a covert stroke at the highest order of his brethren the clergy. It runs thus: "*The miseries of life are not properly owing to the unequal distribution of things; but God Almighty, the great King of heaven, is treated like the kings of the earth; who (although perhaps intending well themselves) have often most abominable ministers and stewards, and those generally the vilest, to whom they entrust the most talents* <sup>c</sup>." Dark as it is, this paragraph requires no explanation. The author's natural turn of mind breaks forth upon all occasions, and the politician frequently outweighs the divine. If the dictates of such a spirit were capable of forcing their way from the pulpit, what a glorious, what a consistent figure, must SWIFT have made in the rostrum at *Rome*, or in one of the porticos at *Athens*!

The next moral essay, for I can scarce call it a sermon, is upon the *Testimony of Conscience*: in which the author inserts some very striking observations upon such false notions of honour as are too prevalent in the world. I am so far from thinking it a trouble, that I think it a pleasure, to transcribe the particular passage: "*The false principle, which some men set up in the place of conscience to be their director in life, is what those who pretend to*

<sup>a</sup> Page 211.

<sup>b</sup> Page 215.

<sup>c</sup> Page 218.

"it,

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"it, call HONOUR. This word is often made the sanction  
 "of an oath; it is reckoned a great commendation to be a  
 "man of strict honour; and it is commonly understood, that  
 "a man of honour can never be guilty of a base action. This  
 "is usually the style of military men; of persons with titles;  
 "and of others who pretend to birth and quality. It is true  
 "indeed, that in ancient times it was universally under-  
 "stood, that honour was the reward of virtue; but if  
 "such honour as is now-a-days going will not permit a man  
 "to do a base action, it must be allowed, there are very  
 "few such things as base actions in nature. No man of  
 "honour, as that word is usually understood, did ever pri-  
 "vately, that his honour obliged him to be chaste or tempe-  
 "rate; to pay his creditors; to be useful to his country; to  
 "do good to mankind; to endeavour to be wise or learned; to  
 "regard his word, his promise, or his oath; or if he had  
 "any of these virtues, they were never learned in the  
 "catechism of honour; which contains but two precepts,  
 "the punctual payment of debts contracted at play, and the  
 "right understanding the several degrees of an affront, in  
 "order to revenge it by the death of an adversary <sup>a</sup>."

The third discourse upon *The Trinity* is indeed a ser-  
 mon, and one of the best in its kind. Dr. SWIFT seems  
 not to have made such a plan his voluntary choice, nor  
 to have built, *suo ex motu*, upon such a basis <sup>b</sup>; but he

<sup>a</sup> Page 228.

<sup>b</sup> In the beginning of his sermon, he lets us know, that  
 he preached it on Trinity Sunday, a day on which all the  
 clergy think themselves confined to this theme.

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has completed the superstructure in a most masterly manner: the materials answer the dignity of the edifice; and the artificer may assume great honour, upon the completion of so noble, so simple, and so useful a pile. The mysterious parts of our religion are apt to have dreadful effects upon weak minds: The general comments upon the sacred writings, and the several sermons upon the most abstruse points of scripture, are too often composed in the gloomy style. Damnation, eternal damnation, is placed with all its horror before our eyes; and we are so terrified at the prospect, that fear makes us imagine, we can comprehend mysteries, which, on this side of the grave, must be for ever denied to our limited understandings. SWIFT has taken the safest, and the properest method of expounding these *arcana*. He advances every position that can be established upon so incomprehensible a subject. He sustains the belief, avows the doctrine, and adapts the matter of faith, as well as possible, to the human capacity. His manner of reasoning is masterly, and his arguments are nervous; particularly where he says, "*It is highly probable, that if God should please to reveal unto us this great mystery of the Trinity, or some other mysteries in our holy religion, we should not be able to understand them, unless he would at the same time think fit to bestow on us some new powers or faculties of the mind, which we want at present, and are reserved to the day of resurrection to life eternal*." But, my HAM, you must be weary of quotations. I

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will make no more: and, in excuse of those already made, I can only offer, that in comments upon original authors quotations are often the best, and perhaps the only explanations that can fully answer the end proposed. I mean, that the original spirit is so volatile, as not to admit of the least transfusion. In ordinary compositions the essence may be extracted, and the subtlest parts distilled: but SWIFT's sermons appeared a chymical preparation of so extraordinary, and penetrating a nature, that I was resolved to send you as much of the æthereal spirit, as might be safely conveyed by the post.

I shall take no notice of a fourth sermon, as it is evidently not composed by the Dean <sup>a</sup>: but I find, that I have omitted to mention two poems of great wit and humour. They are previous to the sermons. The first <sup>b</sup> was artfully published by Dr. SWIFT in a manner so different from those rules of poetry to which he confined himself, that he hoped the public might mistake it for a spurious, or incorrect copy stolen by memory from his original poem. He took great pleasure in this supposition: and I believe it answered his expectation. One of his strictest rules in poetry was to avoid *triplets*. What can have given rise to so nice a peculiarity, is difficult to determine. It might be owing only to a singular turn of thinking; but the reason which he publicly assigned seemed not so much against the practice itself, as against

<sup>a</sup> *The difficulty of knowing one's self*, p. 255.

<sup>b</sup> *The Life and Genuine Character of the Reverend Dr. SWIFT.*

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the poets who indulged themselves in that manner of writing. "A custom (according to the Dean's opinion) introduced by laziness, continued by ignorance, and established by false taste." With deference to so great a critic, it is a custom, that has frequently been pursued with remarkable success. Mr. DRYDEN abounds in triplets; and in some of his most elegant poems, the third concluding verse forms the finest climax in the whole piece. Mr. WALLER, the father of all flowing poetry, has generally reserved the nicest point of wit to his triplicate line: and upon an impartial enquiry, it is almost to be questioned, whether, in many instances, this despicable triplet may not add a greater beauty to a poetical composition, than any other circumstance. To be confined, on any terms, by the links of rhyme, is of great disadvantage to our English poetry. The finest poem that we can boast, and which we equalize, and perhaps would willingly prefer, to the Iliad, is void of those fetters. But, when it is our destiny to wear chains, surely we may be allowed to make them as light and easy as we can.

The second poem <sup>a</sup>, entitled, *Verses on the Death of Dr. SWIFT, occasioned by reading a Maxim in ROCHFouCAULT*, is a most pointed piece of sarcasm. Not any of the Dean's poems have more wit; nor are any of them more severe. In it he has summoned together his whole powers of satir and poetry. It is a parting blow; the legacy of anger and disappointment; but as the two last

<sup>a</sup> Page 151.



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lines \* are grammatically incorrect, and as they were not inserted in the first edition published at *London*, I cannot tell how they have crept into a poem, that is otherwise as exactly polished as any of SWIFT's nicest compositions.

The remaining pieces in this volume are neither worthy of SWIFT's pen, nor of your perusal. Many of them are spurious, and many more are trifling, and in every respect improper for the public view: so that what was once ludicrously said upon a different occasion, may be applied not only to the last volume, but indeed to some of the former, as "they put us in mind of the famous machine in WINSTANLEY's water-works, where, "out of the same vessel, the spectators were presented "with tea, coffee, chocolate, champagne, and sour "small beer."

*I am, my dear Son,  
Your truly affectionate Father,*

O R R E R Y.



## LETTER XXIII.

WE have now gone through FAULKNER's edition of SWIFT's works; but there are still remaining three of

*\* That kingdom he hath left his debtor.  
I wish it soon may have a better.*

his

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his pieces, *The Tale of a Tub*, *the Battle of the Books in St. James's Library*, and *The Fragment*, which, although not absolutely owned by the Dean, *aut Erasmi sunt aut Diaboli*.

The first of these, *The Tale of a Tub*, has made much noise in the world. It was one of SWIFT's earliest performances, and has never been excelled in wit and spirit by his own, or any other pen. The censures that are passed upon it, are various. The most material of which were such as reflected upon Dr. SWIFT, in the character of a clergyman, and a Christian. It has been one of the misfortunes attending Christianity, that many of her sons, from a mistaken filial piety, have indulged themselves in too restrained, and too melancholy a way of thinking. Can we wonder then, if a book, composed with all the force of wit and humour in derision of sacerdotal tyranny, in ridicule of grave hypocrisy, and in contempt of phlegmatic stiffness, should be wilfully misconstrued by some persons, and ignorantly mistaken by others, as a sarcasm and reflexion upon the whole Christian Church? SWIFT's ungovernable spirit of irony has sometimes carried him into very unwarrantable flights of wit. I have remarked such passages with a most unwilling eye. But, let my affections of friendship have been ever so great, my paternal affection is still greater: and I will pursue candour, even with an aching heart, when the pursuit of it may tend to your advantage or instruction. In the style of truth therefore, I must still look upon *The Tale of a Tub*, as no intended insult against Christianity; but as a satire against the wild errors of

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the church of *Rome*, the slow and incomplete  
ation of the Lutherans, and the absurd and affi  
of the Presbyterians. In the character of PETER  
the pope seated on his pontifical throne, and  
with his triple crown. In the picture of MAL  
view LUTHER, and the first reformers: and  
presentation of JACK, we see JOHN CALVIN  
disciples. The author's arrows are chiefly direct  
PETER and JACK. To MARTIN he shews a  
dulgence that the laws of allegory will permit.

The actions of PETER are the actions of a m  
cated with pride, power, rage, tyranny; and fel  
These passions are placed in the most ridicul  
and the effects of them produce to us the t  
doctrines of papal *Rome*, such as purgatory,  
images, indulgences, auricular confession, tran  
tion, and those dreadful monsters, the pontif  
which, according to this ludicrous author, deri  
origin from the famous bulls of COLCHIS, deri  
OVID.

*Terribiles vultus, præfixaque cornua ferri  
Pulveremque solum pede pulsavere bisulco  
Fumificisque locum mugitibus implevere* <sup>a</sup>.

" But LORD PETER'S BULLS, says *The Tale*  
" were extremely vitiated by time in the meta  
" feet, which, from BRASS, was now degener  
" common LEAD. However, the terrible roarin

<sup>a</sup> OVID Metam. Lib. VII. ver. 112.

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"to their lineage was preserved, as likewise that faculty  
"of BREATHING out fire at their nostrils." These passages, and many others, no doubt, must be construed as antichristian by the church of *Rome*. When the chief minister, and his minions, are exposed, the keener the satire, the more liable is it to be interpreted into high treason against the king.

In the character of JACK, a set of people were alarmed, who are easily offended, and who can scarce bear the cheerfulness of a smile. In their dictionary, wit is only another name for wickedness: and the purer or more excellent the wit, the greater and more impious the *abomination*. However wide therefore the difference of PETER and JACK might have been in fashioning their coats, the two brothers most sincerely agreed in their hatred of an adversary so powerful as this anonymous author. They spared no unmannerly reflexions upon his character. They had recourse to every kind of abuse that could reach him. And sometimes it was the work of SWIFT, and his companions: sometimes not a syllable of it was his work; it was the work of one of his uncle's sons, a clergyman: and sometimes it was the work of a person, who was to be nameless. Each of these malicious conjectures reigned in its turn; and you will find, my HAMILTON, that bold assertions, however false, almost constantly meet with success; a kind of triumph, that would appear one of the severest institutes of fate, if time, and truth, did not soon obliterate all marks of the victory.

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The criticisms of the Martinists (whom we may suppose the members of the church of *England*) were, it is to be hoped, more candid: for MARTIN, as I have just now hinted, is treated with a much less degree of sarcasm than the other two brothers. What relates to him is so short, that I will venture to transcribe it. “*They both [LUTHER and CALVIN] “unanimously entered upon this great work [THE REFORMATION], looking sometimes on their coats, and sometimes on the WILL. MARTIN laid the first hand; at one twitch brought off a large handful of POINTS; and, with a second pull, stript away ten dozen yards of FRINGE. But, when he had gone thus far, he demurred a while: he knew very well, there yet remained a great deal more to be done: however, the first heat being over, his violence began to cool, and he resolved to proceed more moderately in the rest of the work; having already very narrowly escaped a swinging rent in pulling off the POINTS, which, being TAGGED WITH SILVER (as we have observed before), the judicious workman had, with much sagacity, double-sown to preserve them from FALLING. Resolving therefore to rid his coat of a huge quantity of GOLD LACE, he picked up the stitches with much caution, and diligently gleaned out all the loose threads as he went; which proved to be a work of time. Then he fell about the embroidered INDIAN figures of men, women, and children; against which, as you have heard in its due place, their father’s testament was extremely exact and severe. These, with much dexterity and application, were, after a while, quite eradicated,*”

“or

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“ or utterly defaced. For the rest, where he observed the  
 “ embroidery to be worked so close, as not to be got away  
 “ without damaging the cloth, or where it served to hide  
 “ or strengthen any flaw in the body of the coat, contracted  
 “ by the perpetual tampering of workmen upon it, he con-  
 “ cluded, the wisest course was to let it remain, resolving  
 “ in no case whatsoever, that the substance of the stuff  
 “ should suffer injury, which he thought the best method for  
 “ serving the true intent and meaning of his father’s  
 “ WILL. And this is the nearest account I have been able  
 “ to collect of MARTIN’s proceedings upon this great revo-  
 “ lution.”

The church of England can scarce be angry at such a favourable account of LUTHER : especially as we have since reformed from LUTHER himself, and, so far as our judgments can teach us, have restored our *habits* still nearer to the original fashion, which they bore at the perfection of the *Testament*. The best, and, what is more extraordinary, the most serious apology, that can be made for the author, was written by himself, and is dated *June 3, 1709* : from which time, it has been constantly printed in a prefatory manner to the work itself. In this apology, Dr. SWIFT candidly acknowledges, that  
 “ *There are several youthful sallies, which, from the grace*  
 “ *and the wise, may deserve a rebuke.*” And further adds, that “ *He will forfeit his life, if any one opinion*  
 “ *can fairly be deduced from the book, which is contrary*  
 “ *to religion or morality.*”

The dedication to *Prince Posterity* will please you : nor will you be less entertained by the several digressions

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which are written in ridicule of bad critics, dull commentators, and the whole fraternity of Grub-street philosophers. *The Introduction* abounds with wit and humour: but the author never loses the least opportunity of venting his keenest satire against Mr. DRYDEN, and consequently loads with insults the greatest, although the least prosperous, of our English poets. Yet who can avoid smiling, when he finds the *Hind and Panther* mentioned as a *complete abstract of sixteen thousand schoolmen*, and when TOMMY POTTS is supposed written by *the same hand*, as a *supplement to the former work*? I am willing to imagine, that DRYDEN, in some manner or other, had offended my friend Dr. SWIFT, who, otherwise, I hope, would have been more indulgent to the errors of a man oppressed by poverty, driven on by party, and bewildered by religion.

But although our satirical author, now and then, may have indulged himself in some personal animosities, or may have taken freedoms not so perfectly consistent with that solemn decency, which is required from a clergyman; yet, throughout the whole piece, there is a vein of ridicule and good-humour, that laughs pedantry and affectation into the lowest degree of contempt, and exposes the character of PETER and JACK in such a manner, as never will be forgiven, and never can be answered.

*The Battle of the Books* took its rise from the controversy between Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE and Mr. WOTTON: a controversy which made much noise, and employed many pens, towards the latter end of the last century.

This

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This humorous treatise is drawn up in an heroic comic style, in which SWIFT, with great wit and spirit, gives the victory to the former. The general plan is excellent; but particular parts are defective. The frequent chasms puzzle and interrupt the narrative: they neither convey any latent ideas, nor point out any distant or occult sarcasms. Some characters are barely touched upon, which might have been extended; others are enlarged, which might have been contracted. The name of HORACE is scarce inserted, and VIRGIL is introduced only for an opportunity of comparing his translator DRYDEN, to *the Lady in a Lobster; to a Mouse under a Canopy of State; and to a scriwelled Beau within the Penthouse of a full-bot-tomed Perriwig*. These similies carry the true stamp of ridicule: but rancour must be very prevalent in the heart of an author, who could overlook the merits of DRYDEN; many of whose dedications and prefaces are as fine compositions, and as just pieces of criticism, as any in our language. The translation of VIRGIL was a work of haste and indigence: DRYDEN was equal to the undertaking, but unfortunate during the conduct of it.

And now, as I have mentioned VIRGIL, and as I indulge myself in an unlimited manner of expressing to you my thoughts, I must plead that kind of habit for inserting a conjecture, which, perhaps, is purely chimerical, but which, in the pursuit of it, has given me no small degree of pleasure, as the motive tends to vindicate one of your favourite poets from the censure of ingratitude.

The critics have been justly surpris'd, that VIRGIL seems entirely to have neglected HORACE, when it is



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evident, that HORACE takes frequent occasions of expressing the greatest tenderness, esteem, and gratitude, for VIRGIL. They have endeavoured to account for this neglect, by supposing, that some of VIRGIL's poems have been lost; otherwise, who could imagine, that the author of the *Æneid* should have passed over in silence the name of so excellent, and so estimable a friend? In the Greek and Roman writers it is not to be doubted, that there are many expressions, which, at the time when written, were evident marks to distinguish particular characters. These, by the course of years, are now rendered doubtful and obscure. HORACE's *Glycon* was always taken for a gladiator, till at the bottom of the statue of the HERCULES FARNESE an old inscription was discovered, that shews it was so called from the name of the famous sculptor who made it. Many passages in Mr. POPE's poems, which are now easily explained, may, in a few centuries, become entirely unintelligible, and (excuse the improbability of the circumstance) when it is no longer remembered that he lived at *Twickenham*, he will no longer be known for *the Swan of Thames*.

VIRGIL, in his Eclogues, celebrates POLLIO, VARUS, and GALLUS, and he dedicates his Georgics to MÆCENAS: but in the *Æneid*, he could not introduce any of his cotemporaries, except by feigned names: and even then, the connexion of the fable must be preserved, and some poetical differences must be allowed. Such a conduct has induced some of the commentators to affix various names to particular characters in the *Æneid*. They have mentioned MARIUS, POMPEY, CURIO, and others;  
but

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but their hints and sketches have been imperfect, and written at random.

Bishop ATTERBURY is more explicit. That learned prelate, in all the elegance and delicacy of criticism, illustrates the passage relating to IAPIS, and fixes to it the name and character of ANTONIUS MUSA, an eminent physician, and polite scholar, at *Rome*. The BARRY of his day.

From these attempts, I have been encouraged to search for the character of HORACE; and instead of an imperfect picture, I hope, I shall be able to point out a very remarkable likeness in the following lines.

*Et amicum Cretea musis,  
Cretea musarum comitem, cui carmina semper  
Et citharæ cordi, numerosque intendere nervis;  
Semper equos, atque arma virum, pugnasque canebas.*

An ode in HORACE, which appears, by the mention of TIRIDATES, to have been written at the same time with the seventh book of VIRGIL, bears a very striking resemblance to some part of this quotation. You remember

*Musis amicus tristitiam et metus  
Tradam protervis in mare Creticum  
Portare ventis.*

The *Musis amicus* was, in all probability, a synonymous name of HORACE, by which he was then distin-

\* Dr. EDWARD BARRY of *Dublin*,

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guished, and perfectly well known at *Rome*. Such an appellation might be given to him from this gay and spirited ode. He begins it by delivering at once all his cares and fears to be buried in the Cretan sea. *TIBULLUS* and *ANACREON* have the same general sentiment; but *HORACE* chooses this particular part of the ocean for the eternal grave of all his cares. A circumstance which might occasion *VIRGIL* to give him the name of *CRETÆUS*: and I dare say, *HAM*, you will agree with me in observing, that *VIRGIL* repeats that name with a certain tenderness and esteem, as if he was unwilling to quit the subject, and as if he could wish to dwell longer in the description of so excellent a genius, and so remarkable a poet.

But the line,

*Et citbaræ cordi, numerosque intendere nervis,*

seems directly to point out *HORACE*, and to celebrate him for his lyric performances. *MONSIEUR DACIER*, in the preface to his *HORACE*, gives an history of the progress and decay of lyric poetry. He observes, that from the foundation of *Rome* to the reign of *AUGUSTUS CÆSAR* (a space of above seven hundred years) not one lyric poet had appeared. *HORACE* was the first Roman, who, with a surprising natural genius, having studied and acquired the beauty and strength of numbers, formed himself upon the Grecian plan, and became the best Latin lyric poet of the Augustan age. From whence, it almost

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almost evidently appears, that this passage can be adapted only to him.

Thus far, without straining the explanation of these lines, I would willingly hope, that the features of HORACE are discernible. The last verse indeed does not seem to answer so exactly his poetical character.

*Semper equos, atque arma virum, pugnasque canebat.*

Let us try, if we cannot banish the objection, and establish a perfect confirmation of the resemblance.

Several of the odes of HORACE are remarkably fine in the warlike strain, particularly the ode to AUGUSTUS after the battle of *Actum*, when the senate had agreed to address solemn hymns to the Emperor in the same manner as to the celestial deities. The ode beginning *Carlo tenantem*, and occasioned by the conquest over the Britons and Persians, is full of fire. But the address to ASINIUS POLLIO breathes war and slaughter still in a more exalted strain.

*Jam nunc minaci murmure cornuum  
Perstringis aures : jam litui strepunt :  
Jam fulgor armorum fugaces  
Terret equos, equitumque vulsus.*

MONSIEUR SANADON observes, that this stanza, and the four which follow it, are written with the greatest spirit of lyric poetry. His expression is *La force de Poésie lyrique ne va point au delà*.

It is very certain, that HORACE was a perfect master of the poetical array of battle, the din of war, and the sound  
of

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of clarions : or, in the words of VIRGIL, *equos, atque arma virum, pugnasque canebat*. But, notwithstanding his powers in that style, he seems constantly desirous of declining any long poem, or laboured performance, upon these subjects. In his ode beginning *Motum ex Metello*, he advises ASINIUS POLLIO to lay aside all intentions of writing tragedy, and he farther urges him to complete a poem upon the civil wars, between ANTONY and OCTAVIUS : but he damps this advice, by pointing out the danger of the theme. He tells POLLIO,

*Periculosa plenum opus alae  
Tractas ; et incedis per ignes  
Suppositos cineri doloso.*

Thus, while he expatiates upon the difficulty of the undertaking, he shews himself superior to the labour that deter him. As a Poet, we may be assured he was equal to the task : as a politician, we may presume, he avoided it. He was unwilling to remind his imperial master of a war, in which he had appeared in arms against his prince : and in which the character of AUGUSTUS had not been distinguished with the most perfect degree of lustre. Yet, that such a kind of work was expected from him, may undoubtedly be deduced from what he says in one of his odes to MÆCENAS.

*Tuque pedestribus  
Dices historiis prælia Caesaris,  
Mæcenas, MELIUS.*

Here

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 203

Here you see, HORACE assigns to his patron MÆCENAS all the laurels that might accrue from a complete poem upon the wars of AUGUSTUS : and in another place, the poet, with more modesty than justice, says,

*Cupidum, pater optime, vires  
Deficiunt : neque enim quivis horrentia pilis  
Agmina, nec fracta percutentes cuspide Gallos,  
Aut labentis equo describat vulnera Partii.*

These lines are in such a strain, as to demonstrate the powers of the muse much less deficient than the will. It is very probable therefore, that, during the time, while the public expectations were raised in hopes of seeing HORACE undertake some poem entirely formed upon the military plan, VIRGIL might have composed that part of the *Æneid* from whence I have drawn my quotation, and might very justly have given HORACE the character of CRETUS, not only in consequence of the odes already written, but under a kind of certainty, of seeing future and more perfect poems in the same strain.

I submit to your judgment, whether these surmises are just. I really think they bear a great resemblance to truth. Positive assertions on such doubtful points I leave to more established critics : and return from the civil wars in *Italy* to the civil wars in St JAMES's library.

The two chief heroes among the modern generals are WOTTON and BENTLEY. Their figures are displayed in the most disadvantageous attitudes. The former is described,

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described, *full of spleen, dulness, and ill manners.* The latter is represented, *tall, without shape or comeliness; large, without strength or proportion.* But, I will not anticipate your future pleasure in reading a performance that you will probably wish longer, and more complete.

The *Battle*, which is maintained by the antients with great superiority of strength, though not of numbers, ends with the demolition of BENTLEY and his friend WOTTON by the lance of your grandfather. And here, my son, it is not possible for me to avoid taking notice of one particular passage relating to my father. "BOYLE," says the author, *clad in a suit of armour, WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN HIM BY ALL THE GODS, advanced towards the trembling foe, who now fled before him.*"

I shall not dispute about the gift of the armour: but thus far I will venture to observe, that the gods never bestowed celestial armour, except upon heroes, whose courage, and superior strength, distinguished them from the rest of mankind; whose merits and abilities were already conspicuous; and who could wield, though young, the sword of MARS, and adorn it with all the virtues of MINERVA: and let me assure you, my dearest HAMILTON, that your grandfather sustained the character, which he had so early acquired, to the last moment of his life, and, on many occasions, exerted his abilities in such a manner, as evidently shewed, that he wanted neither armour, nor extraordinary assistance, to add to his first victory such superior ornaments, as will for ever be repositied among the brightest trophies, in the temple of fame.

But:

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That before I quit this subject, give me leave to own how sensibly I felt the force of an arrow directed from his hand. The wound, I believe, was not designed to be lasting. It was given in a passion, and upon an extraordinary occasion: but afterwards he was so desirous to heal it, by a return of the greatest degree of friendship and affection, that he had directed the remaining scar to be entirely erased, when his unexpected and too sudden death prevented the completion of his kind intentions, and the perfection of my cure. With difficulty I forgived the shock. As it was not in my power to avoid the severe decree, I obeyed: and, by my obedience, have flattered myself, that I submitted to the will of heaven. However, I have since thought, that I could not offer a more grateful sacrifice to his manes, than by exerting those faculties, which he had, at first, cultivated with so much care; and had depressed, at last, perhaps only to raise them higher. Oh my son! how often have I reflected upon the happiness of *ÆNEAS*, in hearing the ghost of *ANCHISES* say,

*Sic quidam ducebam animo rebarque futurum,  
Tempora dinumerans: nec me mea cura sefellit!*

The name of my honoured father has insensibly drawn me into this digression, which, to speak the truth, I look upon as due to his memory, to my own sentiments, and to your filial tenderness.

The Fragment, or a Discourse concerning the mechanical operation of the Spirit, is a satire against enthusiasm, and those



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those affected inspirations, which constantly begin in folly, and very often end in vice. In this treatise, the author has revelled in too licentious a vein of sarcasm: many of his ideas are nauseous, some are indecent, and others have an irreligious tendency: nor is the piece itself equal in wit and humour either to *The Tale of a Tub*, or *The Battle of the Books*. I should constantly choose rather to praise, than to arraign, any part of my friend SWIFT's writings: but in those tracts, where he tries to make us uneasy with ourselves, and unhappy in our present existence, *there*, I must yield him up entirely to censure.

I am, dear HAMILTON,

Your most affectionate Father,

O R R E R Y.



## L E T T E R XXIV.

DR. SWIFT left behind him few manuscripts. Not one of any consequence, except an account of the peace of *Utrecht*, which he called *an History of the four last Years of Queen ANNE*. The title of an history is too pompous for such a performance. In the historical style, it wants dignity, and candour: but as a pamphlet, it will appear the best defence of Lord OXFORD's administration,

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 207

ation, and the clearest account of the treaty of *Utrecht*, that has hitherto been written.

In some of his leisure hours, he had begun an history of *England*, and had pursued it through two or three reigns, from WILLIAM the Conqueror. The contempt which he conceived of our antient monarchs, made him soon lay the design aside. His aversion to kings was invincible. You will say perhaps, this aversion was rooted in pride: possibly it might: but, in your course of reading, you will find so very few princes whose merits and abilities entitle them even to a crown of rushes, that you will probably think no small degree of prudence necessary to reconcile us to a monarchical state. What has not this nation suffered from our former princes? Even from the best of them? If we speak candidly of our boasted Queen ELIZABETH, she was, in many instances, a tyrant: but she was a tyrant with sense and dignity. She knew the true interest of the nation, and she pursued it; but she pursued it in an arbitrary manner. She was fortunate in the time of reigning: for her character has been exalted by the want of merit in her successor, from whose misconduct gushed forth that torrent of misery, which not only bore down his son, but overwhelmed the three kingdoms. If you ask what were the precious fruits of the restoration? the answer will be, An exchange only from one confusion to another: from jealousies between general MONK and LAMBERT, to jealousies between the dukes of *York* and *Monmouth*: a perpetual rotation of false politics: a king with the best-natured disposition imaginable, suffering innocent blood

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so be shed without remorse. Or, if you enquire, what was the effect of a lawful sovereign? A shameful submission to a neighbouring kingdom, which, not long before, had trembled at the frowns of an usurper. Such was the fate of poor *England*! To these wretched times, succeeded the religious fooleries, and the weak attempts, of *JAMES* the second. Then followed the revolution. But, I must descend no lower. Let us therefore turn our eyes from home, and take a momentary view of other nations. If we look towards ancient *Rome*, and consider her first seven monarchs, how wicked, or how insignificant, were their characters? And, when the name of *Monarch* was changed into that of *Emperor*, what a tyrannical pack of *Cæsar*'s pass before our eyes! Many of them, the greatest monsters that human nature ever produced: yet these were lords, emperors, and kings of the world. If you read the Old Testament, and consult the Chronicles of the kings of *Judah*, you will find them a set of the proudest, and the most obstinate princes upon earth. Tell me then, my *HAMILTON*, is not such a retrospect enough to disgust us against kings? Bad as it is, it must not disgust an Englishman. We ought ever to regard, honour, and preserve, our original constitution, which of all regal states is the best framed in the universe. The balance of our government is hung indeed in the nicest manner imaginable; a single hair will turn it; but when it is held exactly even, there cannot be a finer system under heaven: and I must freely own to you, that I think our kings have been often less blameable than their people. You remember the exclamation  
of

## AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 209

of the Scotchman, upon seeing the flatteries paid to JAMES the first at his accession, "*By my saul, mon, you "faukish folk will spoil a geud king.*" The Scotchman was in the right: but we continued in our foolish ways to JAMES and his successors. Our courtly adulations are always outrageous, we know no bounds. The person flattered, must be more than human, not to be sometimes blinded by such perpetual incense. Perhaps we borrow this kind of servility from the *French*, who, in the last century bestowed the title of JUST upon LEWIS the thirteenth, during whose reign, such repeated acts of cruelty, oppression, and injustice, were perpetrated, as scarce any other annals can produce.

An additional excuse, that may be made for the errors of our *English* kings, is the different treatment which they find at the beginning, from what they receive at the latter end of their reigns. At the beginning, all is smoothness, all is joy and felicity: but the sun-shine is seldom of a very long duration. Clouds of jealousy arise, and the whole atmosphere of the court is soon filled with noxious vapours, with heart-burnings, animosities, and personal altercations between ministers: which often ascend to such a height, as even to molest the king in his chair of state. *Delirant Achivi, plebuntur reges.* These are the unhappy effects that proceed, as I have before observed, from the very noblest cause, the thirst of liberty. A free people are constantly jealous of their rights. A wise king will preserve to them those rights, and by such a maxim will establish his own. But, the great misfortune of our former *English* princes has

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been their indolent submission to the name, without the least attempt of discharging the duties of a sovereign. The life of such a prince must have proved inglorious to his people, and unhappy to himself. He must have found himself only the second person in his kingdom, nay perhaps the third or fourth ; the leviathans of power being seldom, if ever, without their coadjutors : and in that case, it is a point of condescension, to permit their royal master to be one of the group. Our *English* commentaries, which are in truth a very melancholy, and a very reproachful history, give us many mortifying instances of this kind. I live so detached from the great world, and I keep myself at such a distance from the high commerce of politics, that I know little or nothing of the present times ; and therefore can only instruct you from my reading, and not from my experience. Your fate perhaps may lead you to have admittance to the sacred closet, or to approach the exalted steps of the throne. If that honour is in reserve for you, use it in such a manner, as shall shew, that you think yourself accountable to God, and your country, for every action of your life. Begin by conquering your own prejudices, and then endeavour to conquer those of your master. Make him in love with parliaments, but let those parliaments be free. Bring him thoroughly acquainted, even with the minutest branch of the constitution. Study his honour. Prevent his passions. Correct his errors. Keep *England* ever uppermost in your thoughts : and consider the king of *England* as born only for the good of his people. Shield him, if possible, from flattery : it is a rock more fatal

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to princes, than *Charybdis* ever was to mariners. Guide his leisure to manly employments, such as may preserve him from the enervating delicacies of a court. In your public capacity forget your relations, and your private friends. Know none but the friends of your country. Despise all dignities that you have not more than thoroughly deserved. Fear nothing but your own conscience. Aim at nothing but the prosperity of the state. Remember, that *Great Britain* is an island; and that nature, by detaching it from the continent, has rendered our situation particularly fortunate: and has pointed out to us, in what element our chief strength is destined. Cherish upon all occasions our naval armament: and fail not to oppose your voice, against any greater number of land-forces than are absolutely necessary: I had almost said, necessary for reviews in *Hyde Park*. A king, who enjoys the true affection of his people, will never stand in need of foldiers to defend him. He will dread no competitor: he will apprehend no domestic danger. He will distinguish which of the powers abroad are his natural and political enemies, and which are so situated, as to require his friendship and alliance. He will attend to the improvement of the colonies in the *West Indies*, and to the different branches of trade that may safely and wisely be encouraged in the three different kingdoms.

You find, my HAMILTON, that I suppose your imaginary sovereign capable of receiving instruction, and you of giving it. But far be it from me to wish you his only counsellor, or (to express myself more properly) his

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sole minister : one, who draws every thing within the vortex of his own power ; who is at once admiral, general, treasurer, archbishop, judge, and perpetual legislator. Such a kind of magistrate is odious to the *English* constitution.

If from the two houses of parliament you separate or withdraw the king, the government will remain in the form of a republic, where every man has his part allotted to him, and is to co-operate with the rest, for the benefit of the collective body of the people. What then is the king ? Only the first and chief magistrate, who acts in a superior degree to the rest. All dignities, all honours, flow from the crown. Such a power alone, exclusive of every other, will give a prince sufficient authority throughout all his dominions : but he has many more prerogatives. He has the glorious privilege of pardoning offences, and rewarding great actions : while the odious, or at least the reluctant parts of jurisdiction, such as punishment, and condemnation, are allotted to his officers ; to himself alone is left the god-like power of mercy and forgiveness. From hence perhaps, kings have thought themselves representatives of God. Would to God, they thought themselves representatives of the people ! The law, indeed, generously looks upon the king as incapable of doing wrong. Of what pernicious consequence therefore must be the interposition of a single man between the king and the people ? How much must he eclipse his master's glory, and the prosperity of the state ? His situation will necessarily make him act in an arbitrary manner. He is  
answerable

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answerable to the laws ; and, if his orders are disputed, he is unhinged ; if they are disobeyed, he is undone, unless he has artfully brought his adversaries to a greater degree of corruption than himself ; and, in that case, — But I must remember the boundaries of a letter, and must consider, that, having already finished my most material observations upon the life and writings of the Dean of St. PATRICK's, it is time to draw towards an end. I originally chose the topic, my dearest HAMILTON, because few characters could have afforded so great a variety of faults and beauties. Few men have been more known and admired, or more envied and censured, than Dr. SWIFT. From the gifts of nature he had great powers, and, from the imperfection of humanity, he had many failings. I always considered him as an *Abstract and brief chronicle of the times* ; no man being better acquainted with human nature, both in the highest, and in the lowest scenes of life. His friends, and correspondents, were the greatest and most eminent men of the age. The sages of antiquity were often the companions of his closet : and although he industriously avoided an ostentation of learning, and generally chose to draw his materials from his own store ; yet his knowledge in the ancient authors evidently appears from the strength of his sentiments, and the classic correctness of his style.

You must have observed, my dear son, that I could not submit to be confined within the narrow limits of biographical memoirs. I have gone into a more extensive field ; and, in my progress, I wish I may have thrown out such hints, as shall tend to form your mind



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to virtue and learning: the ultimate end of all my wi  
and all my cares. Heaven grant, my HAMILTON,  
I may deserve from you, the honour which Hon  
pays to his father (*Insuevit pater hoc me, ut fugeren  
emplis vitiorum, &c.*), when you drop a filial tear  
the grave of

*Your most affectionate Father,*

*your sincerest Friend, and*

*your happy Companion,*

*Leicester Fields,  
August 28, 1751.*

O R R E J

*The* E N D.



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